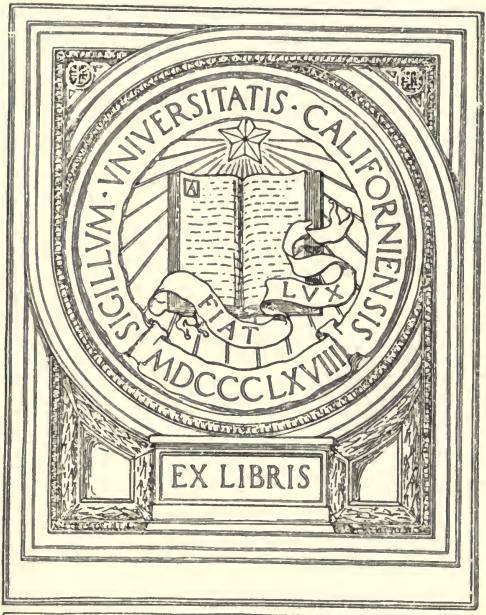
UC-NRLF
$B 309 262


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

THE NEGRO QUESTION

GEORGE W. CABLE'S WRITINGS.

BONAVENTURE. A Prose Pastoral of Acadian Louisiana. 12mo, $1.25.

DR. SEVIER. 12mo, paper, 50 cts.; cloth, $1.25.

THE GRANDISSIMES. A Story of Creole Life. 12mo, $1.25.

OLD CREOLE DAYS. 12mo, $1.25.
Uniform Edition. 4 vols. in a box, $5.00.

OLD CREOLE DAYS. 2 vols., 16mo, paper, each 30 cts.; cloth, each, 75 cts.

MADAME DELPHINE. 16mo, 75 cts.

THE CREOLES OF LOUISIANA. Illustrated. 4to, $2.50.

THE SILENT SOUTH, Together with the Freedman's Case in Equity and the Convict Lease System. With Portrait. 12mo, $1.00.

STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF LOUISIANA. Illustrated. 12mo, $2.00.

THE

NEGRO QUESTION

BY

GEORGE W. CABLE

AUTHOR OF "THE SILENT SOUTH"

REESE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1898

Copyright, 1890, by
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

WM. F. FELL & CO.
PRINTERS,
PHILADELPHIA.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

THE NEGRO QUESTION, ... 1

THE QUESTION—

I. Have Colored Americans in the South the same Rights as Americans of Foreign Birth, ... 1

II. Color Discrimination, ... 7

III. Inconsistencies, ... 16

THE ANSWER—

I. The Social Basis of Slavery still Exists, ... 24

II. Enfranchisement a Cause of Apprehension, . . . 32

III. The Freedmen Loyal to Government, ... 39

IV. Distinction Between Civil and Social Equality, . 43

V. Responsibility of Southern White Men, ... 47

VI. Material Development in the South, ... 51

NATIONAL AID TO SOUTHERN SCHOOLS, . . . 59

WHAT SHALL THE NEGRO DO? 66

A SIMPLER SOUTHERN QUESTION, ... 88

WHAT MAKES THE COLOR LINE? 110

93495

PAGE

THE SOUTHERN STRUGGLE FOR PURE GOVERNMENT, ... 116

I. A First Necessity, ... 116

II. Does the Negro Want Pure Government? . . . 123

III. Supposing the Negro Unsuppressed, ... 128

IV. The Policy of Pure Government First, ... 133

V. The Industrial New South, ... 139

VI. The Reign of the One-Party Idea, ... 146

VII. The Inventions of Despair, ... 154

VIII. A more Excellent Way, ... 162

NOTE.

The following pages constitute a continuous development of a single subject. The divisions of the work appear in the form of separate papers only because of the earlier publication of most of them as magazine articles.

G. W. CABLE.

93495

REESE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE NEGRO QUESTION.

THE QUESTION.

I.

The matter that is made the subject of these pages is not to-day the most prominent, but it is the gravest, in American affairs. It is one upon which, of late years, as we might say, much inattention has been carefully bestowed. It has become a dreaded question. We are not politically indolent. We are dealing courageously with many serious problems. We admit that no nation has yet so shaken wrong and oppression from its skirts that it may safely and honorably sit down in a state of mercantile and æsthetical pre-occupation. And yet the matter that gives us daily the profoundest unrest goes daily by default. The Nation's bitter experiences with it in years past, the baffling complications that men more cunning than wise have woven around it, its proneness to swallow up all other questions and the eruptions of rancor and strife that attend every least sign of its spontaneous re-opening,

have made it such a weariness and offence to the great majority, and especially to our commercial impatience, that the public mind in large part eagerly accepts the dangerous comfort of postponement.

What is this question? Superficially, it is whether a certain seven millions of the people, one-ninth of the whole, dwelling in and natives to the Southern States of the Union, and by law an undifferentiated part of the Nation, have or have not the same full measure of the American citizen's rights that they would have were they entirely of European instead of wholly or partly African descent. The seven millions concerning whom the question is asked, answer as with one voice, that they have not. Millions in the Northern States, and thousands in the Southern, of whites, make the same reply. While other millions of whites, in North and South, respond not so often with a flat contradiction as with a declaration far more disconcerting. For the "Southerner" speaks truly when he retorts that nowhere in the entire Union, either North or South, are the disadvantages of being a black, or partly black, man confined entirely to the relations of domestic life and private society; but that in every part there is a portion, at least, of the community that does not claim for, or even willingly

yield to, the negro the whole calendar of American rights in the same far-reaching amplitude and sacredness that they do for, or to, the white man. The Southern white man points to thousands of Northern and Western factories, counting-rooms, schools, hotels, churches and guilds, and these attest the truth of his countercharge. Nowhere in the United States is there a whole community from which the black man, after his physical, mental and moral character have been duly weighed, if they be weighed at all, is not liable to suffer an unexplained discount for mere color and race, which he would have to suffer publicly in no other country of the enlightened world. This being the fact, then, in varying degrees according to locality, what does it prove? Only that this cannot be the real point of issue between North and South, and that this superficial definition is not the true one.

Putting aside mere differences of degree, the question is not, Are these things so? but, Ought they so to be? To this a large majority in the Northern States from all classes, with a small minority of the Southern whites, also from all ranks of life, and the whole seven million blacks, irrespective of party leanings, answer No. On the other hand, a large majority of the whites in the Southern States—large as to the white popu-

lation of those States, but a very small minority in the Nation at large—answer a vehement "Yes; these things should and shall be so."

But how does this small minority maintain itself? It does so owing to the familiar fact that, although by our scheme of government there is a constant appeal to the majority of the whole people, the same scheme provides, also, for the defence of local interests against rash actions of national majorities by a parallel counter-appeal (constantly through its Senate and at times in other ways) to the majority, not of the people *en masse*, but of the States in their corporate capacity. Now a very large minority in the Northern States, whose own private declaration would be against a difference between white men's rights and other men's rights, nevertheless refuse now, as they refused before the Civil War, to answer with a plain yes or no, but maintain, with the Southern white-rule party, that *whether these things ought so to be or not is a question that every State must be allowed to answer for, and to, itself alone;* thus so altering the voice of the Nation, when it speaks by States, as virtually to nullify that negative answer which would be given by a majority of the whole people. In the Civil Rights bill the verdict of the States was once given against all race discrimination in all

matters of public rights whatsoever, and for confining it within that true domain—of private choice—to which the judgment of other Christian nations consigns it. But the Civil Rights bill, never practically effective in the communities whose upper ranks were hostile to it, has at last perished in the inner citadel of our government's strong conservatism, the national Supreme Court, and the Senate majority that passed the bill was long ago lost by revolutions in the Southern States. Thus, by a fundamental provision in the National Government, intended for the very purpose of protecting the weak from the strong, a small national minority has for twenty-five years been enabled to withstand the pressure of an immense majority.

Whether this is by a right or wrong use of the provision is part of the open question. The weak are protected from the strong, but the still weaker are delivered into the hands of the strong. Seven millions of the Nation, mostly poor, ignorant and degraded, are left for the definition and enjoyment of rights, worth more than safety or property, to the judgment of some ten other millions of unquestioned intelligence and virtue, but whose intelligence and virtue were not materially less when, with a courage and prowess never surpassed, they drenched their own land with their

own blood to keep these darker millions in slavery. However, be it a use or an abuse of the Nation's scheme of order; be it right or wrong; this is politically the stronghold of the conservative party in the Southern States; and it is made stronger still, steel-clad and turreted, as it were, with the tremendous advantage of the *status quo*—that established order of things which, good or bad, until it becomes intolerable to themselves, men will never attack with an energy equal to that with which it is defended.

But political strength is little by itself. The military maxim, that no defences are strong without force enough in them to occupy their line, is true of civil affairs. Entrenchment in the letter of a constitution avails little with the people at large on either side of a question, unless the line of that entrenchment is occupied by a living conviction of being in the right. The most ultra-Southern position on the negro question has an element of strength close akin to this. To be right is the only real necessity; but where is the community that will not make and defend with treasure and blood the assumption that what is necessary is right? "Southerners," in the political sense of the term, may sometimes lack a clear, firm-founded belief that they are right; they may have no more than a restless confidence

that others are as wrong as they; but they have at least a profound conviction that they are moved by an imminent, unremitting, imperative necessity. Not that this is all; hundreds of thousands of them, incapacitated by this very conviction from falling into sympathy with the best modern thought, have been taught, and are learning and teaching, not only on the hustings, but in school, in college, at the fireside, through the daily press, in the social circle and in church, that in their attitude on the negro question they are legally, morally and entirely right.

II.

Now, specifically, what are these things that the majority of a free nation says ought not to be, while a sectional majority triumphantly maintains they must, will, ought to and shall be? Give an example of an actual grievance. One commonly esteemed the very least on the list is this: Suppose a man, his wife and their child, decent in person, dress and deportment, but visibly of African or mixed blood, to take passage on a railway train from some city of the Eastern States, as Boston, or of the Western, as Chicago. They will be thrown publicly into company with many others, for an ordinary American railway passenger coach seats fifty per-

sons, and a sleeping-car accommodates twenty-five; and they will receive the same treatment from railway employés and passengers as if, being otherwise just what they are, they were of pure European descent. Only they will be much less likely than white persons to seek, or be offered, new acquaintanceships. Arriving in New York, Philadelphia, or any other Northern city, they will easily find accommodations in some hotel of such grade as they would be likely to choose if, exactly as they are, they were white. They may chance upon a house that will refuse, on account of their color, to receive them; but such action, if made known, will be likely to receive a wide public reprobation, and scant applause even from the press of the Southern States. If the travelers choose to continue their journey through the night, they will be free to hire and occupy berths in a sleeping-car, and to use all its accessories—basins, towels, pillows, etc.—without the least chance of molestation in act or speech from any one of the passengers or employés, let such passengers or employés be from any State of the Union, Northern or Southern.

But, on reaching the Southern States, the three travelers will find themselves at every turn under special and offensive restrictions, laid upon them

not for any demerit of person, dress or manners, but solely and avowedly on account of the African tincture in their blood, however slight that may be. They may still be enjoying the comforts of the sleeping-car, by virtue of the ticket bought in a Northern State and not yet fully redeemed. But they will find that while in one Southern State they may still ride in an ordinary first-class railway coach without hindrance, in another they will find themselves turned away from the door of one coach and required to limit themselves to another, equal, it may be, to the first in appointments, and inferior only in the social rank of its occupants. They may protest that in America there are no public distinctions of social rank; but this will avail them nothing. They may object that the passengers in the car from which they are excluded are not of one, but palpably of many and widely different social ranks, and that in the car to which they are assigned are people not of their grade only but of all sorts; they will be told with great plainness that there is but one kind of negro. They will be told that they are assigned equal but separate accommodation because the presence of a person of wholly, or partly, African blood in the same railway car on terms of social equality with the white passengers is to those white passengers

an intolerable offence; and if the husband and father replies that it is itself the height of vulgarity to raise the question of private social rank among strangers in railway cars, he will be fortunate if he is only thrust without more ado into the "colored car," and not kicked and beaten by two or three white men whose superior gentility has been insulted, and he and his wife and child put off at the next station to appeal in vain to the courts. For in court he will find that railway companies are even required by the laws of the State to maintain this ignominious separation of all who betray an African tincture, refined or unrefined, clean or unclean, from the presence of the white passengers in the first-class cars, be those passengers ever so promiscuous a throng.

Such is an example of one of the least grievances of the colored man under the present régime in the Southern States; and so dull is the common perception of wrongs committed at a distance, that hundreds of thousands of intelligent, generous, sensitive people in the Northern States are daily confessing their inability to see any serious hardship in such a case, if only the "colored car" be really equal in its appointments to the one in which only white people of every sort are admitted; as if a permanent ignominious distinction on account of ancestry, made in pub-

lic, by strangers and in the enjoyment of common public rights were not an insult or an injury unless joined to some bodily discomfort.

Let it be plainly understood that though at least scores of thousands are intelligent and genteel, yet the vast majority of colored people in the United States are neither refined in mind nor very decent in person. Their race has never had "a white man's chance." In America it has been under the iron yoke of a slavery that allowed no distinction of worth to cross race lines; and in Africa it has had to contend for the mastery of wild nature on a continent so unconquerable that for thousands of years the white race has striven in vain to subdue it, and is only now at last strong enough to pierce it, enriched, enlightened and equipped by the long conquest of two others less impregnable. For all that is known the black is "an inferior race," though how, or how permanently inferior, remains unproved. But the core of the colored man's grievance is that the individual, in matters of right that do not justly go by race, is treated, whether man or child, without regard to person, dress, behavior, character or aspirations, in public and by law, as though the African tincture, much or little, were itself stupidity, squalor and vice. But let us see whether the grievance grows.

On passing into a third Southern State, the three travelers, though still holders of first-class tickets, will be required to confine themselves to the so-called second-class car, a place never much better than a dram shop. When the train stops for meals, and the passengers, men, women and children, the rough, the polished, all throng into one common eating-room to receive a common fare and attention, those three must eat in the kitchen or go hungry. Nor can they even await the coming of a train, in some railway stations, except in a separate "colored room." If they tarry in some Southern city they will encounter the most harassing and whimsical treatment of their most ordinary public rights as American citizens. They may ride in any street car, however crowded, seated beside, or even crammed in among, white men or women of any, or every, station of life; but at the platform of the railway train, or at the threshold of any theatre, or concert, or lecture hall, they will be directed to the most undesirable part of the house, and compelled to take that or nothing. They will find that the word "public" rarely means public to them; that they may not even draw books from the public libraries or use their reading rooms.

Should the harried and exasperated man be

so fierce or indiscreet as to quarrel with, and strike, some white man, he will stand several chances to a white man's one of being killed on the spot. If neither killed nor half-killed, but brought into court, he will have ninety-nine chances in a hundred of confronting a jury from which, either by, or else in spite of, legal provision, men of African tincture have been wholly or almost wholly excluded. If sent to prison he must come under a penal system which the report of the National Commissioner of Prisons officially pronounces "a blot upon civilization." He will find the population of the State prisons often nine-tenths colored, divided into chain-gangs, farmed out to private hands, even subleased, and worked in the mines, quarries, in railway construction and on turnpikes, under cordons of Winchester rifles; veritable quarry slaves. He will find most of the few white convicts under this system suffering the same outrages; but he will also find that the system itself disappears wherever this general attitude toward the black race disappears, and that where it and its outrages continue, the race line in prison is obliterated only when the criminal becomes a negotiable commodity and it costs the lessee money to maintain the absurd distinction. He would find the number of colored men within

those deadly cordons out of all proportion to the colored population outside, as compared with the percentages of blacks in and out of prison in States not under this régime. There are State prisons in which he would find the colored convicts serving sentences whose average is nearly twice that of the white convicts in the same places for the same crimes. In the same or other prisons he would find colored youths and boys by scores, almost by hundreds, consorting with older criminals, and under sentences of seven, ten, twenty years, while the State Legislatures vote down year after year the efforts of a few courageous and humane men either to establish reformatories for colored youth, or to introduce the element of reform into their so-called penitentiaries.

But suppose he commits no offence against person or property; he will make another list of discoveries. He will find that no select school, under "Southern" auspices, will receive his child. That if he sends the child to a public school, it must be, as required by law, to a school exclusively for colored children, even if his child is seven times more white than colored. Though his child be gentle, well-behaved, cleanly and decorously dressed, and the colored school so situated as to be naturally and properly the

choice of the veriest riff-raff of the school population, he will have no more liberty than before; he will be told again, "We know but one kind of negro." The child's father and mother may themselves be professional instructors; but however highly trained; of whatever reputation for moral and religious character; however talented as teachers or disciplinarians; holding the diploma of whatever college or university, Wellesley, Vassar, Yale, Cornell; and of whatever age or experience, they will find themselves shut out by law from becoming teachers in any public school for white children, whether belonging to, and filled from, the "best neighborhood," or in, and for, the lowest quarter of alleys and shanties. They will presently learn that in many hundreds of Southern school-districts where the populations are too sparse and poor to admit of separate schools for the two races, the children of both are being brought up in ignorance of the very alphabet rather than let them enjoy a common public right under a common roof. They will find that this separation is not really based on any incapacity of children to distinguish between public and private social relations; but that the same separation is enforced among adults; and that while every Southern State is

lamenting its inability to make anything like an adequate outlay for public education, and hundreds of thousands of colored children are growing up in absolute illiteracy largely for lack of teachers and school-houses, an expensive isolation of race from race is kept up even in the normal schools and teachers' institutes. Even in the house of worship and the divinity school they would find themselves pursued by the same invidious distinctions and separations that had followed them at every step, and would follow and attend them still to, and in, the very almshouse and insane asylum.

III.

And then they would make one more discovery. They would find that not only were they victims of bolder infractions of the most obvious common rights of humanity than are offered to any people elsewhere in Christendom, save only the Chinaman in the far West, but that to make the oppression more exasperating still, there is not a single feature of it in any one State, though justifiable on the plea of stern necessity, that does not stand condemned by its absence, under the same or yet more pronounced conditions, in

some other State. Sometimes even one part of a State will utterly stultify the attitude held in another part. In Virginia or South Carolina a colored person of decent appearance or behavior may sit in any first-class railway car, but in Georgia the law forbids it, and in Kentucky the law leaves him to the caprice of railway managements, some of which accord and others withhold the right. In some States he is allowed in the jury box, in some he is kept out by the letter of statutes, and in some by evasion of them; while in Tennessee some counties admit him to jury duty and others exclude him from it. In one or two Southern cities, the teachers in colored public schools must be white. In certain others they must be colored; and in still others they may be either. In Louisiana certain railway trains and steamboats run side by side, within a mile of one another, where in the trains a negro or mulatto may sit where he will, and on the boats he must confine himself to a separate quarter called the "freedman's bureau."

The Civil Rights bill was fought for years and finally destroyed, with the plea that it infringed the right of common carriers and entertainers to use their own best judgment in distributing their passengers and guests with an equitable consideration for the comfort of all. In fact, it only

forbade distributions that, so far from consulting the common comfort, humor the demand of one crudely self-assorted private social class for an invariable, ignominious isolation or exclusion of another. Yet the same States and persons who so effectually made this plea, either allow and encourage its use as a cover for this tyrannous inequity, or else themselves ignore their own plea, usurp the judgment of common carriers and entertainers, and force them by law to make this race distribution, whether they deem it best or not.

And yet again, all over the South there are scattered colleges, academies and tributary grammar schools, established and maintained at the expense of individuals and societies in the Northern States, for the education, at low rates of tuition and living, of the aspiring poor, without hindrance as to race or sex. For more than twenty years these establishments have flourished and been a boon to the African-American, as well as to the almost equally noted "poor whites" of the Southern mountain regions, sandhills and "pauper counties," and through both these classes to the ultra-Southern white man of the towns and plantations—a boon the national value of which neither he nor one in a thousand of its hundreds of thousands of Northern supporters has an ade-

quate conception, else these establishments would receive seven times their present pecuniary support. These institutions have graduated some hundreds of colored students as physicians and lawyers. At one time lately they had more than eight hundred divinity students, nearly all of them colored. Their pupils of all grades aggregate over seventeen thousand, and the sixteen thousand colored teachers in the public schools of the South have come almost entirely from them. But now in these institutions there is a complete ignoring of those race distinctions in the enjoyment of common public rights so religiously enforced on every side beyond their borders; and yet none of those unnamable disasters have come to or from them which the advocates of these onerous public distinctions and separations predict and dread. On scores of Southern hilltops these schools stand out almost totally without companions or competitors in their peculiar field, so many refutations, visible and complete, of the idea that any interest requires the colored American citizen to be limited in any of the civil rights that would be his without question if the same man were white. Virtually, the whole guild of educators in the Southern States, from once regarding these institutions with unqualified condemnation and enmity, are now

becoming their friends and, in some notable cases, their converts. So widely have the larger colleges demonstrated their unique beneficence that in some cases Southern State Governments, actively hostile to the privileges of civil liberty they teach and apply, are making small annual appropriations in contribution toward their support.

So bristling with inconsistencies, good and bad, would our three travelers find this tyrannous and utterly unrepublican régime. Nowhere else in enlightened lands and in this day do so many millions see their own fellow-citizens so play football with their simplest public rights; for the larger part of the Southern white people do with these laws of their own making what they please, keeping or breaking them as convenient.

But their discoveries would still go on. They would hear these oppressions justified by Southern white people of the highest standing, and —more's the shame—by Northern tourists in the South, on the ground that the people upon whom they are laid are a dull, vicious, unclean race, contact with which would be physically, intellectually and morally offensive and mischievous to a higher race. And when they might ask why the lines of limited rights are not drawn around the conspicuously dull, vicious and unclean of both races for the protection of

the opposite sort in both, they would come face to face upon the amazing assumption that the lowest white man is somehow a little too good for even so much contact with the highest black, as may be necessary for a common enjoyment of public rights; and, therefore, that no excellence, moral, mental or physical, inborn or attained, can buy for a "man of color" from these separationists any distinction between the restrictions of his civil liberty and those of the stupidest and squalidest of his race, or bring him one step nearer to the enjoyment of the rights of a white man; or, if at all, then only as a matter of the white man's voluntary condescension and with the right disguised as a personal privilege. They would find that the race line is not a line of physical, moral or intellectual excellence at all. Stranger yet, they would learn that no proportion of white men's blood in their own veins, unless it washes out the very memory of their African tincture, can get them abatement of those deprivations decreed for a dull, vicious and unclean race, but that—men, women and children alike—hundreds and thousands of mixed race are thus daily and publicly punished by their brothers for the sins of their fathers. They would find the race line not a race line at all.

They would find that the mere contact of race

with race is not the matter objected to, but only any and every sort of contact on an equal footing. They would find that what no money, no fame, no personal excellence and no fractional preponderance of European blood can buy, can nevertheless be bought instantly and without one of these things by the simple surrender of the attitude of public equality. They would find that the entire essence of the offence, any and everywhere where the race line is insisted on, is the apparition of the colored man or woman as his or her own master; that masterhood is all that all this tyranny is intended to preserve, and that the moment the relation of master and servant is visibly established between race and race there is the hush of peace.

"What is that negro—what is that mulattress—doing in here?" asks one private individual of another in some public place, and the other replies:—

"That's nothing; he is the servant of that white man just behind him; she is the nurse of those children in front of her."

"Oh, all right." And the "cordial relation" is restored. Such conversation, or equivalent soliloquy, occurs in the South a hundred times a day.

The surrender of this one point by the colored

man or woman buys more than peace—it buys amity; an amity clouded only by a slight but distinct and constant air and tone of command on the one part, a very gross and imperfect attitude of deference on the other, and the perpetual unrest that always accompanies forcible possession of anything. But since no people ever compelled another to pay too much for peace without somehow paying too much for it themselves, the master-caste tolerates, with unsurpassed supineness and unconsciousness, a more indolent, inefficient, slovenly, unclean, untrustworthy, ill-mannered, noisy, disrespectful, disputatious, and yet servile domestic and public menial service than is tolerated by any other enlightened people. Such is but one of the smallest of many payments which an intelligent and refined community has to make for maintaining the lines of master and servant-hood on caste instead of on individual ambition and capacity, and for the forcible equalization of millions of unequal individuals under one common public disdain. Other and greater payments and losses there are, moral, political, industrial, commercial, as we shall see when we turn, as now we must, to the other half of this task, and answer the two impatient questions that jostle each other for precedence as they spring from

this still incomplete statement of the condition of affairs.

The two questions are these: If the case is so plain, then, in the first place, how can the millions of intelligent and virtuous white people of the South make such a political, not to say such a moral, mistake? And, in the second place, how can the overwhelming millions of the North, after spending the frightful costs they spent in the war of '61–'65, tolerate this emasculation of the American freedom which that war is supposed to have secured to all alike?

THE ANSWER.

I.

As to the Southern people the answer is that, although the Southern master-class now cordially and unanimously admit the folly of slaveholding, yet the fundamental article of political faith on which slavery rested has not been displaced. As to the people of the North the answer is simpler still: the Union is saved.

The Northern cause in our civil war was not primarily the abolition of slavery, although many a Northern soldier and captain fought

mainly for this and cared for no other issue while this remained. The Southern cause was not merely for disunion, though many a Southern soldier and captain would never have taken up the sword to defend slave-holding stripped of the disguise of State sovereignty. The Northern cause was preëminently the National unity. Emancipation—the emancipation of the negroes —was not what the North fought for, but only what it fought with. The right to secede was not what the South fought for, but only what it fought with. The great majority of the Southern white people loved the Union, and consented to its destruction only when there seemed to be no other way to save slavery; the great bulk of the North consented to destroy slavery only when there seemed no other way to save the Union. To put in peril the Union on one side and slavery on the other was enough, when nothing else was enough, to drench one of the greatest and happiest lands on earth with the blood of hundreds of thousands of her own children. Now, what thing of supreme value rested on this Union, and what on this slavery, that they should have been defended at such cost? There rested on, or more truly there underlay, each a fundamental principle, conceived to be absolutely essential to the safety, order, peace, fortune and

honor of society; and these two principles were antagonistic.

They were more than antagonistic; they were antipodal and irreconcilable. No people that hold either of these ideas as cardinal in their political creed will ever allow the other to be forced upon them from without so long as blood and lives will buy deliverance. Both were brought from the mother country when America was originally colonized, and both have their advocates in greater or less number in the Northern States, in the Southern, and wherever there is any freedom of thought and speech.

The common subject of the two is the great lower mass of society. The leading thought of the one is that mass's elevation, of the other its subjugation. The one declares the only permanent safety of public society, and its highest development, to require the constant elevation of the lower, and thus of the whole mass, by the free self-government of all under one common code of equal civil rights. It came from England, but it was practically, successfully, beneficently applied on a national scale first in the United States, and Americans claim the right to call it, and it preëminently, the American idea, promulgated and established, not by Northerners or Southerners, one greatly more than another,

but by the unsectional majority of a whole new Nation born of the idea. The other principle declares public safety and highest development to require the subjugation of the lower mass under the arbitrary protective supremacy of an untitled but hereditary privileged class, a civil caste. Not, as it is commonly miscalled, an aristocracy, for within one race it takes in all ranks of society; not an aristocracy, for an aristocracy exists, presumably, at least, with the wide consent of all classes, and men in any rank of life may have some hope to attain to it by extraordinary merit and service; but a caste; not the embodiment of a modern European idea, but the resuscitation of an ancient Asiatic one.

That one of these irreconcilable ideas should by-and-by become all-dominant in the formation of public society in one region, and its opposite in the other region, is due to original differences in the conditions under which the colonies were settled. In the South, the corner-stone of the social structure was made the plantation idea—wide lands, an accomplished few, and their rapid aggrandizement by the fostering oversight and employment of an unskilled many. In the North, it was the village and town idea—the notion of farm and factory, skilled labor, an intelligent many, and ultimate wealth through an

assured public tranquillity. Nothing could be more natural than for African slavery, once introduced, to flourish and spread under the one idea, and languish and die under the other. It is high time to be done saying that the South retained slavery and the North renounced it merely because to the one it was, and to the other it was not, lucrative. It was inevitable that the most conspicuous feature of one civilization should become the public schoolhouse, and of the other the slave yard. Who could wish to raise the equally idle and offensive question of praise and blame? When Northerners came South by thousands and made their dwelling there, ninety-nine hundredths of them fell into our Southern error up to the eyes, and there is nothing to prove that had the plantation idea, to the exclusion of the village idea, been planted in all the colonies, we should not by this time have had a West Indian civilization from Florida to Oregon. But it was not to be so. Wherever the farm village became the germinal unit of social organization, there was developed in its most comprehensive integrity, that American idea of our Northern and Southern fathers, the representative self-government of the whole people by the constant free consent of all to the frequently reconsidered choice of the majority.

Such a scheme can be safe only when it includes inherently the continual and diligent elevation of that lower mass which human society everywhere is constantly precipitating. But slave-holding on any large scale could not make even a show of public safety without the continual and diligent debasement of its enslaved lower millions. Wherever it prevailed it was bound by the natural necessities of its own existence to undermine and corrode the National scheme. It mistaught the new generations of the white South that the slave-holding fathers of the Republic were approvers and advocates of that sad practice, which by their true histories we know they would gladly have destroyed. It mistaught us to construe the right of a uniform government of all by all, not as a common and inalienable right of man, but as a privilege that became a right only by a people's merit, and which our forefathers bought with the blood of the Revolution in 1776–'83, and which our slaves did not and should not be allowed to acquire. It mistaught us to seek prosperity in the concentration instead of the diffusion of wealth, to seek public safety in a state of siege rather than in a state of peace; it gave us subjects instead of fellow-citizens, and falsely threatened us with the utter shipwreck of public and private society

if we dared accord civil power to the degraded millions to whom we had forbidden patriotism. Thus, it could not help but misteach us also to subordinate to its preservation the maintenance of a National union with those Northern communities to whose whole scheme of order slaveholding was intolerable, and to rise at length against the will of the majority and dissolve the Union when that majority refused to give slaveholding the National sanction.

The other system taught the inherent right of all human society to self-government. It taught the impersonal civil equality of all. It admitted that the private, personal inequality of individuals is inevitable, necessary, right and good; but condemned its misuse to set up arbitrary public inequalities. It declared public equality to be, on the one hand, the only true and adequate counterpoise against private inequalities, and, on the other, the best protector and promotor of just private inequalities against unjust. It held that virtue, intelligence and wealth are their own sufficient advantage, and need for self-protection no arbitrary civil preponderance; that their powers of self-protection are never inadequate save when by forgetting equity they mass and exasperate ignorance, vice and poverty against them. It insisted that there is no safe protection

but self-protection; that poverty needs at least as much civil equipment for self-protection as property needs; that the right and liberty to acquire intelligence, virtue and wealth are just as precious as the right and liberty to maintain them, and need quite as much self-protection; that the secret of public order and highest prosperity is the common and equal right of all lawfully to acquire as well as retain every equitable means of self-aggrandizement, and that this right is assured to all only through the consent of all to the choice of the majority frequently appealed to without respect of persons. And last, it truly taught that a government founded on these principles and holding them essential to public peace and safety might comfortably bear the proximity of alien neighbors, whose ideas of right and order were not implacably hostile; but that it had no power to abide unless it could put down any internal mutiny against that choice of the majority which was, as it were, the Nation's first commandment.

The war was fought and the Union saved. Fought as it was, on the issue of the consent of all to the choice of the majority, the conviction forced its way that the strife would never end in peace until the liberty of self-government was guaranteed to the entire people, and slavery, as

standing for the doctrine of public safety by subjugation, destroyed. Hence, first, emancipation, and then, enfranchisement. And now even the Union saved is not the full measure of the Nation's triumphs; but, saved once by arms, it seems at length to have achieved a better and fuller salvation still; for the people of the once seceded States, with a sincerity that no generous mind can question, have returned to their old love of this saved Union, and the great North, from East to utmost West, full of elation, and feeling what one may call the onus of the winning side, cries "Enough!" and asks no more.

II.

Thus stands the matter to-day. Old foes are clasping hands on fields where once they met in battle, and touching glasses across the banqueting board, pledging long life to the Union and prosperity to the South, but at every feast there is one empty seat.

Why should one seat be ever empty, and every guest afraid to look that way? Because the Southern white man swears upon his father's sword that none but a ghost shall ever sit there. And a ghost is there; the ghost of that old heresy of public safety by the mass's subjugation. This is what the Northern people cannot under-

stand. This is what makes the Southern white man an enigma to all the world beside, if not also to himself. To-day the pride with which he boasts himself a citizen of the United States and the sincerity with which he declares for free government as the only safe government cannot be doubted; to-morrow comes an explosion, followed by such a misinterpretation of what free government requires and forbids that it is hard to identify him with the nineteenth century. Emancipation destroyed domestic bondage; enfranchisement, as nearly as its mere decree can, has abolished public servitude; how, then, does this old un-American, undemocratic idea of subjugation, which our British mother country and Europe as well are so fast repudiating—how does it remain? Was it not founded in these two forms of slavery? The mistake lies just there: They were founded in it, and removing them has not removed it.

It has always been hard for the North to understand the alacrity with which the ex-slaveholder learned to condemn as a moral and economic error that slavery in defense of which he endured four years of desolating war. But it was genuine, and here is the explanation: He believed personal enslavement essential to subjugation. Emancipation at one stroke proved it

was not. But it proved no more. Unfortunately for the whole Nation there was already before emancipation came, a defined status, a peculiar niche, waiting for freed negroes. They were nothing new. Nor was it new to lose personal ownership in one's slave. When, under emancipation, no one else could own him, we quickly saw he was not lost at all. There he stood, beggar to us for room for the sole of his foot, the land and all its appliances ours, and he, by the stress of his daily needs, captive to the land. The moment he fell to work of his own free will, we saw that emancipation was even more ours than his; public order stood fast, our homes were safe, our firesides uninvaded; he still served, we still ruled; all need of holding him in private bondage was disproved, and when the notion of necessity vanished the notion of right vanished with it. Emancipation had destroyed private, but it had not disturbed public subjugation. The ex-slave was not a free man; he was only a free negro.

Then the winners of the war saw that the great issue which had jeopardized the Union was not settled. The Government's foundation principle was not reëstablished, and could not be while millions of the country's population were without a voice as to who should rule, who

should judge, and what should be law. But, as we have seen, the absolute civil equality of privately and socially unequal men was not the whole American idea. It was counterbalanced by an enlarged application of the same principle in the absolute equality of unequal States in the Federal Union, one of the greatest willing concessions ever made by stronger political bodies to weaker ones in the history of government. Now manifestly this great concession of equality among the unequal States becomes inordinate, unjust and dangerous when millions of the people in one geographical section, native to the soil, of native parentage, having ties of interest and sympathy with no other land, are arbitrarily denied that political equality within the States which obtains elsewhere throughout the Union. This would make us two countries. But we cannot be two merely federated countries without changing our whole plan of government; and we cannot be one without a common foundation. Hence the freedman's enfranchisement. It was given him not only because enfranchisement was his only true emancipation, but also because it was, and is, impossible to withhold it and carry on American government on American ground principles. Neither the Nation's honor nor its safety could allow the restoration of revolted

States to their autonomy with their populations divided by lines of status abhorrent to the whole National structure.

Northern men often ask perplexedly if the freedman's enfranchisement was not, as to the South, premature and inexpedient; while Southern men as often call it the one vindictive act of the conqueror, as foolish as it was cruel. It was cruel. Not by intention, and, it may be, unavoidably, but certainly it was not cruel for its haste, but for its tardiness. Had enfranchisement come into effect, as emancipation did, while the smoke of the war's last shot was still in the air, when force still ruled unquestioned, and civil order and system had not yet superseded martial law, the agonies, the shame and the incalculable losses of the Reconstruction period that followed might have been spared the South and the Nation. Instead there came two unlucky postponements, the slow doling out of re-enfranchisement to the best intelligence of Southern white society and the delay of the freedman's enfranchisement—his civil emancipation—until the "Old South," instead of reorganizing public society in harmony with the National idea, largely returned to its entrenchments in the notion of exclusive white rule. Then, too late to avert a new strife, and as little more than a

defensive offset, the freedman was invested with citizenship, and the experiment begun of trying to establish a form of public order, wherein, under a political equality accorded by all citizens, to all citizens, new and old, intelligence and virtue would be so free to combine, and ignorance and vice feel so free to divide, as to insure the majority's free choice of rulers of at least enough intelligence and virtue to secure safety, order and progress. This experience, the North believed, would succeed, and since this was the organic embodiment of the American idea for which it had just shed seas of blood, it stands to reason the North would not have allowed it to fail. But the old South, still bleeding from her thousand wounds, but as brave as when she fired her first gun, believed not only that the experiment would fail, but also that it was dangerous and dishonorable. And to-day, both in North and South, a widespread impression prevails that this is the experiment which was made and did in fact fail. Whereas it is just what the Old South never allowed to be tried.

This is the whole secret of the Negro Question's vital force to-day. And yet the struggle in the Southern States has never been by the blacks for and by the whites against a black supremacy, but only for and against an arbitrary

pure white supremacy. From the very first until this day, in all the freedman's intellectual crudity, he has held fast to the one true, National doctrine of the absence of privilege and the rule of all by all, through the common and steadfast consent of all to the free and frequent choice of the majority. He has never rejected white men's political fellowship or leadership because it was white, but only and always when it was unsound in this doctrine. His party has never been a purely black party in fact or principle. The "solid black vote" is only by outside pressure solidified about a principle of American liberty, which is itself against solidity and destroys the political solidity of classes wherever it has free play. But the "solid white vote"—which is not solid by including all whites, but because no colored man can truly enter its ranks, much less its councils, without accepting an emasculated emancipation—the solid white vote is solid, not by outside pressure but by inherent principle. Solid twice over; first, in each State, from sincere motives of self-preservation, solid in keeping the old servile class, by arbitrary classification, servile; and then solid again by a tacit league of Southern States around the assumed right of each State separately to postpone a true and complete emancipation as long as the fear remains

that, with full American liberty—this and no more—to all alike, the freedman would himself usurp the arbitrary domination now held over him and plunder and destroy society.

So, then, the Southern question at its root is simply whether there is any real ground sufficient to justify this fear and the attitude taken against it. Only remove this fear, which rests on a majority of the whole white South despite all its splendid, well-proved courage, and the question of right, in law and in morals, will vanish along with the notion of necessity.

Whoever attempts to remove this apprehension must meet it in two forms: First, fear of a hopeless wreck of public government by a complete supremacy of the lower mass; and second, fear of a yet more dreadful wreck of private society in a deluge of social equality.

III.

Now, as to public government, the freedman, whatever may be said of his mistakes, has never shown an intentional preference for anarchy. Had he such a bent he would have betrayed something of it when our civil war offered as wide an opportunity for its indulgence as any millions in bondage ever had. He has shown at least as prompt a choice for peace and order as

any "lower million" ever showed. The vices said to be his in inordinate degree are only such as always go with degradation, and especially with a degraded status; and when, in Reconstruction years, he held power to make and unmake laws, amid all his degradation, all the efforts to confine him still to an arbitrary servile status, and all his vicious special legislation, he never removed the penalties from anything that the world at large calls a crime. Neither did he ever show any serious disposition to establish race rule. The whole spirit of his emancipation and enfranchisement, and his whole struggle, was, and is, to put race rule of all sorts under foot, and set up the common rule of all. The fear of anarchy in the Southern States, then, is only that perfectly natural and largely excusable fear that besets the upper ranks of society everywhere, and often successfully tempts them to commit inequitable usurpations; and yet a fear of which no amount of power or privilege ever relieves them—the fear that the stupid, the destitute and the vicious will combine against them and rule by sheer weight of numbers.

Majority rule is an unfortunate term, in that it falsely implies this very thing; whereas its mission in human affairs is to remove precisely this danger. In fact a minority always rules. At least

it always can. All the great majority ever strives for is the power to choose by what, and what kind of, a minority it shall be ruled. What that choosing majority shall consist of, and hence the wisdom and public safety of its choice, will depend mainly upon the attitude of those who hold, against the power of mere numbers, the far greater powers of intelligence, of virtue and of wealth. If these claim, by virtue of their own self-estimate, an arbitrary right to rule and say who shall rule, the lower elements of society will be bound together by a just sense of grievance and a well-grounded reciprocation of distrust; the forced rule will continue only till it can be overturned, and while it lasts will be attended by largely uncounted but enormous losses, moral and material, to all ranks of society. But if the wise, the upright, the wealthy, command the courage of our American fathers to claim for all men a common political equality, without rank, station or privilege, and give their full and free adherence to government by the consent of all to the rule of a minority empowered by the choice of the majority frequently appealed to without respect of persons, then ignorance, destitution and vice will not combine to make the choosing majority. They cannot. They carry in themselves the very principle of disintegra-

tion. Without the outside pressure of common and sore grievance, they have no lasting powers of cohesion. The minority always may rule. It need never rule by force if it will rule by equity. This is the faith of our fathers of the Revolution, and no community in America that has built squarely and only upon it has found it unwise or unsafe.

This is asserted with all the terrible misrule of Reconstruction days in full remembrance. For, first be it said again, that sad history came not by a reign of equal rights and majority rule, but through an attempt to establish them while the greater part of the wealth and intelligence of the region involved held out sincerely, steadfastly and desperately against them, and for the preservation of unequal privileges and class domination. The Reconstruction party, even with all its taxing, stealing and defrauding, and with the upper ranks of society at war as fiercely against its best principles as against its bad practices, planted the whole South with public schools for the poor and illiterate of both races, welcomed and cherished the missionaries of higher education, and, when it fell, left them still both systems, with the master-class converted to a belief in their use and necessity. The history of Reconstruction dispassionately viewed, is a final, trium-

phant proof that all our Americam scheme needs to make it safe and good, in the South as elsewhere, is consent to it and participation in it by the law-abiding, intelligent portions of the people, with one common freedom, in and between high life and low, to combine, in civil matters, against ignorance and vice, in high life and low, across, yet without disturbing, the lines of race or any other line of private rank or predilection.

There are hundreds of thousands in the Southern States who, denying this, would promptly concede it all in theory and in practice, but for the second form of their fear: the belief that there would result a confusion of the races in private society, followed by intellectual and moral debasement and by a mongrel posterity. Unless this can be shown to be an empty fear, our Southern problem cannot be solved.

IV.

The mere ambiguity of a term here has cost much loss. The double meaning of the words "social" and "society" seems to have been a real drawback on the progress of political ideas among the white people of the South. The clear and definite term, civil equality, they have made synonymous with the very vague and indefinite term, social equality, and then turned and totally

misapplied it to the sacred domains of private society. If the idea of civil equality had rightly any such application, their horror would certainly be just. To a forced private social equality the rest of the world has the same aversion, but it knows and feels that such a thing is as impossible in fact as it is monstrous in thought. Americans, in general, know by a century's experience, that civil equality makes no such proposal, bears no such results. They know that public society—civil society—comprises one distinct group of mutual relations, and private society entirely another, and that it is simply and only evil to confuse the two. They see that public society comprises all those relations that are impersonal, unselective, and in which all men, of whatever personal inequality, should stand equal. They recognize that private society is its opposite hemisphere; that it is personal, selective, assortive, ignores civil equality without violating it, and forms itself entirely upon mutual private preferences and affinities. They agree that civil status has of right no special value in private society, and that their private social status has rightly no special value in their public social—*i. e.*, their merely civil—relations. Even the Southern freedman is perfectly clear on these points; and Northern minds are often puzzled to

know why the whites of our Southern States, almost alone, should be beset by a confusion of ideas that costs them all the tremendous differences, spiritual and material, between a state of truce and a state of peace.

But the matter has a very natural explanation. Slavery was both public and private, domestic as well as civil. By the plantation system the members of the master-class were almost constantly brought into closer contact with slaves than with their social equals. The defensive line of private society in its upper ranks was an attenuated one; hence there was a constant, well-grounded fear that social confusion—for we may cast aside the term "social equality" as preposterous — that social confusion would be wrought by the powerful temptation of close and continual contact between two classes—the upper powerful and bold, the under helpless and sensual, and neither one socially responsible to the other, either publicly or privately. It had already brought about the utter confusion of race and corruption of society in the West Indies and in Mexico, and the only escape from a similar fate seemed to our Southern master-class to be to annihilate and forget the boundaries between public right and private choice, and treat the appearance anywhere of any one visibly of

African tincture and not visibly a servant, as an assault upon the purity of private society, to be repelled on the instant, without question of law or authority, as one would fight fire. Now, under slavery, though confessedly inadequate, this was after all the only way; and all that the whites in the Southern States have overlooked is that the conditions are changed, and that this policy has become unspeakably worse than useless. Dissimilar races are not inclined to mix spontaneously. The common enjoyment of equal civil rights never mixed two such races; it has always been some oppressive distinction between them that, by holding out temptations to vice instead of rewards to virtue, has done it; and because slavery is the foulest of oppressions it makes the mixture of races in morally foulest form. Race fusion is not essential to National unity; such unity requires only civil and political, not private social, homogeneity. The contact of superior and inferior is not of necessity degrading; it is the *kind* of contact that degrades or elevates; and public equality — equal public rights, common public liberty, equal mutual responsibility—this is the great essential to beneficent contact across the lines of physical, intellectual and moral difference, and the greatest safeguard of private society that human law or custom can provide.

V.

Thus we see that, so far from a complete emancipation of the freedman bringing those results in the Southern States which the white people there so justly abhor, but so needlessly fear, it is the only safe and effectual preventive of those results, and final cure of a state of inflammation which nothing but the remaining vestiges of an incompletely abolished slavery perpetuates. The abolition of the present stage of siege rests with the Southern white man. He can abolish it, if he will, with safety and at once. The results will not be the return of Reconstruction days, nor the incoming of any sort of black rule, nor the supremacy of the lower mass—either white, black or mixed; nor the confusion of ranks and races in private society; nor the thronging of black children into white public schools, which never happened even in the worst Reconstruction days; nor any attendance at all of colored children in white schools or of white in colored, save where exclusion would work needless hardship; nor any new necessity to teach children—what they already know so well—that the public school relation is not a private social relation; nor any greater or less necessity for parents to oversee their children's choice of companions in

school or out; nor a tenth as much or as mischievous playmating of white and colored children as there was in the days of slavery; nor any new obstruction of civil or criminal justice; nor any need of submitting to any sort of offensive contact from a colored person, that it would be right to resent if he were white. But seven dark American-born millions would find themselves freed from their constant liability to public, legalized indignity. They would find themselves, for the first time in their history, holding a patent, with the seal of public approval, for all the aspirations of citizenship and all the public rewards of virtue and intelligence. Not merely would their million voters find themselves admitted to, and faithfully counted at, the polls—whether they are already or not is not here discussed—but they would find themselves, as never before, at liberty to choose between political parties. These are some of the good—and there need be no ill—changes that will come whenever a majority of the Southern whites are willing to vote for them.

There is a vague hope, much commoner in the North than in the South, that somehow, if everybody will sit still, "time" will bring these changes. A large mercantile element, especially, would have the South "let politics alone." It is

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

too busy to understand that whatever people lets politics alone is doomed. There are things that mere time can do, but only vigorous agitation can be trusted to change the fundamental convictions on which a people has built society. Time may do it at last, but it is likely to make bloody work of it. For either foundation idea on which society may build must, if let alone, multiply upon itself. The elevation idea brings safety, and safety constantly commends and intensifies itself and the elevation idea. The subjugation idea brings danger, and the sense of danger constantly intensifies the subjugation idea. Time may be counted on for such lighter things as the removal of animosities and suspicions, and this in our Nation's case it has done. Neither North nor South now holds, or suspects the other of holding, any grudge for the late war. But trusting time to do more than this is but trusting to luck, and trusting to luck is a crime.

What is luck doing? Here is the exclusive white party in the Southern States calling itself, and itself only, "The South," praying the Nation to hold off, not merely its interference, but its counsel—even its notice—while it, not removes, but refines, polishes, decorates and disguises to its own and the Nation's eyes, this corner-stone of all its own and the South's, the whole South's

woes; pleading the inability of any but itself to "understand the negro," when, in fact, itself has had to correct more, and more radical mistakes about the negro since the war than all the Nation beside; failing still, more than twenty years since Reconstruction began and more than ten since its era closed, to offer any definition of the freedman's needs and desires which he can accept; making daily statements of his preferences which the one hundred newspapers published for his patronage, and by himself, daily and unanimously repudiate; trying to settle affairs on the one only false principle of public social order that keeps them unsettled; proposing to settle upon a *sine qua non* that shuts out of its councils the whole opposite side of the only matter in question; and holding out for a settlement which, whether effected or not, can but perpetuate a disturbance of inter-state equality fatal to the Nation's peace —a settlement which is no more than a refusal to settle at all.

Meanwhile, over a million American citizens, with their wives and children, suffer a suspension of their full citizenship, and are virtually subjects and not citizens, peasants instead of freemen. They cannot seize their rights by force, and the Nation would never allow it if they could. But they are learning one of the worst lessons class

rule can teach them—exclusive, even morbid, pre-occupation in their rights as a class, and inattention to the general affairs of their communities, their States and the Nation. Meanwhile, too, the present one-sided effort at settlement by subjugation is not only debasing to the under mass, but corrupting to the upper. For it teaches these to set aside questions of right and wrong for questions of expediency; to wink at and at times to defend and turn to account evasions, even bold infractions, of their own laws, when done to preserve arbitrary class domination; to vote confessedly for bad men and measures as against better, rather than jeopardize the white man's solid party and exclusive power; to regard virtue and intelligence, vice and ignorance, as going by race, and to extenuate and let go unprosecuted the most frightful crimes against the under class, lest that class, being avenged, should gather a boldness inconsistent with its arbitrarily fixed status. Such results as these are contrary to our own and to all good government.

VI.

There is now going on in several parts of the South a remarkable development of material wealth. Mills, mines, furnaces, quarries, railways are multiplying rapidly. The eye that cannot

see the value of this aggrandizement must be dull indeed. But many an eye, in North and South, and to the South's loss, is crediting it with values that it has not. To many the "New South" we long for means only this industrial and commercial expansion, and our eager mercantile spirit forgets that even for making a people rich in goods a civil order on sound foundations is of greater value than coal or metals, or spindles and looms. May the South grow rich! But every wise friend of the South will wish, besides, to see wealth built upon public provisions for securing through it that general beneficence, without which it is not really wealth. He would not wish those American States a wealth like that which once was Spain's. He would not wish to see their society more diligent for those conditions that concentrate wealth than for those that disseminate it. Yet he must see it. That is the situation, despite the assurances of a host of well-meaning flatterers that a New South is laying the foundations of a permanent prosperity. They cannot be laid on the old plantation idea, and much of that which is loosely called the New South to-day is farthest from it—it is only the Old South readapting the old plantation idea to a peasant labor and mineral products. Said a mine owner of the far

North lately: "We shall never fear their competition till they get rid of that idea." A lasting prosperity cannot be hoped for without a disseminated wealth, and public social conditions to keep it from congestion. But this dissemination cannot be got save by a disseminated intelligence, nor intelligence be disseminated without a disseminated education, nor this be brought to any high value, without liberty, responsibility, private inequality, public equality, self-regard, virtue, aspirations and their rewards.

Many ask if this new material development of the South will not naturally be followed by adequate public provisions for this dissemination by-and-by. There is but one safe answer: That it has never so happened in America. From our furthest East to our furthest West, whenever a community has established social order in the idea of the elevation of the masses, it has planned, not for education and liberty to follow from wealth and intelligence, but for wealth and intelligence to follow from education and liberty; and the community whose intelligent few do not make the mass's elevation by public education and equal public liberty the corner-stone of a projected wealth, is not more likely to provide it after wealth is achieved and mostly in their own hands.

Our American public-school idea—American at least in contrast with any dissimilar notion—is that a provision for public education adequate for the whole people, is not a benevolent concession but a paying investment, constantly and absolutely essential to confirm the safety of a safe scheme of government. The maintenance and growth of public education in the Southern States, as first established principally under reconstruction rule, sadly insufficient as it still is, is mainly due to the partial triumph of this idea in the minds of the Southern whites, and its eager acceptance, with or without discordant conditions, by the intelligent blacks, and in no region is rightly attributable to an exceptionable increase of wealth. Much less is it attributable, as is often conjectured, to the influx of Northern capital and capitalists, bringing Northern ideas with them. It ought to go without saying, that immigration, with or without capital, will always try to assimilate itself to the state of society into which it comes. Every impulse of commerce is not to disturb any vexed issue until such issue throws itself immediately across the path. It never purposely molests a question of social order. So it is in the South.

Certain public men in both North and South have of late years made, with the kindest inten-

tions, an unfortunate misuse of statistical facts to make it appear that public society in the South is doing, not all that should be done, but all it can do, for the establishment of permanent safety and harmony through the elevation of the lower masses especially, in the matter of public education. In truth, these facts do not prove the statement they are called upon to prove, and do the Southern States no kindness in lulling them to a belief in it.* It is said, for instance, that certain Southern States are now spending more annually for public education, in proportion to their taxable wealth, than certain Northern States noted for the completeness of their public school systems. Mississippi may thus be compared with Massachusetts. But really the comparison is a sad injustice to the Southern State, for a century of public education has helped to make Massachusetts so rich that she is able to spend annually twenty dollars per head upon the children in her public schools, while Mississippi, laying a heavier tax, spends upon hers but two dollars per head. Manifestly it is unfair to a State whose public-school system is new to compare it with any whose system is old. The public school

* For a treatment of the question of National aid to Southern education, see the short article printed supplementary to this.

property of Ohio, whose population is one million, is over twice as great as that of ten States of the New South, whose population is three and a half times as large.* And yet one does not need to go as far as the "new West" to find States whose tax-payers spend far more for public education than Southern communities thus far see the wisdom or need of investing. With one third more wealth than Virginia, and but one-tenth the percentage of illiteracy, Iowa spends over four times as much per year for public instruction. With one-fourth less wealth than Alabama, and but one-fourteenth the percentage of illiteracy, Nebraska spends three and a half times as much per year for public instruction. With about the same wealth as North Carolina and less than one-eighth the percentage of illiteracy, Kansas spends over five times as much per year for public education. If the comparison be moved westward again into new regions, the Territory of Dakota is seen making an "expenditure in the year per capita on average attendance in the public schools" of $25.77, being more than the sum of the like per capita expenditures by Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, North

* See Report of United States Commissioner of Education, 1883–'84, page 21, last column of table.

Carolina, Alabama and Georgia combined. In Colorado it is about the same as in Dakota, while in Nevada it is much greater and in Arizona twice as large. As to comparative wealth, the taxable wealth of Dakota in 1880, at least, was but one two-thousandth part of that of the six States with which it is compared.

Now what is the real truth in these facts? That the full establishment of this American public-school idea and of that elevation idea of which it is an exponent, and which has had so much to do toward making the people of the Northern States the wealthiest people in the world, waits in the South not mainly an increase of wealth, but rather the simple consent of the Southern white man to see society's best and earliest safety, the quickest, greatest and most lasting aggrandizement, in that public equality of all men, that national citizenship, wider than race and far wider than the lines of private society, which makes the elevation of the masses, by everything that tends to moral, æsthetical and intellectual education, in school and out of school, the most urgent and fruitful investment of public wealth and trust. Just this sincere confession. All the rest will follow. The black man will not merely be tolerated in his civil and political rights as now sometimes he is and

sometimes he is not; but he will be welcomed into, and encouraged and urged to a true understanding, valuation and acceptance of every public duty and responsibility of citizenship, according to his actual personal ability to respond.

To effect this is not the herculean and dangerous task it is sometimes said to be. The North has 20,000,000 foreign immigrants to Americanize, and only this way to do it. The South, for all her drawbacks, has this comparative advantage; that her lower mass, however ignorant and debased, is as yet wholly American in its notions of order and government. All that is wanting is to more completely Americanize her upper class, a class that is already ruling and will still rule when the change is made; that wants to rule wisely and prosperously, and that has no conscious intention of being un-American. Only this: To bring the men of best blood and best brain in the South to-day, not to a new and strange doctrine, but back to the faith of their fathers. Let but this be done, and there may be far less cry of Peace, Peace, than now, but there will be a peace and a union between the Nation's two great historic sections such as they have not seen since Virginia's Washington laid down his sword, and her Jefferson his pen.

NATIONAL AID TO SOUTHERN SCHOOLS.

Should the National Government make appropriations for public schools? This seems to be the right form of the question; not may it? but should it? If it may, it may; but if it should, it must. The Civil War taught us what it can cost to answer "we should" with "we may not."

We ought to recognize that the constitutionality of one or another Congressional bill is but a small part of the question. A bill, however fine its intention may be, will never become operative if burdened with conditions which State majorities consider imperious and inquisitorial. Moreover, to base the plea for national aid upon the presence of a surplus in the National Treasury strikes me is in principle extremely mischievous, and in policy fatal to the measure. As long as this is made the reason why, it seems to me the scheme will fail.

And yet I certainly think the National Government should make appropriations for public schools in destitute parts of the country, at least in the South. On the general principle I have made in my own mind these points:

First, that the constitutionality of national aid to education is not the question that properly comes first in order. The nation should first ask itself, "Do we in this direction owe a national debt?"—for if so, there *must be*, and we are bound in honor and common honesty to find, some constitutional way to liquidate it. If we owed a debt to a foreign nation, we should cut a sorry figure pleading that we could not make it constitutional to pay it. Shall we not treat our own citizens as well as we would have to treat the citizens of a foreign government?

I think we are confronted here with a distinctly national debt. The educational destitution in the South, so contrary to our American scheme of social order, is distinctly the result of gross defects in that social order inevitably accompanying the institutional establishment of African slavery. It was certainly the Nation's crime.

It is not enough for the North to point to her bloody expiation in war, nor the South to her proportionately greater sacrifice. Expiations, however awful, are not restitutions. Expiations do not pay damages. Here is one of the vast evils resulting from the Nation's error still unremoved. If it had not been for the political complicity of millions of Northern voters we never need have had a war, and slavery must

have perished without one. I think, therefore, that beyond question, the removal of our vast Southern illiteracy is an obligation resting upon the whole Nation, yet one which the States of the North and West cannot meet effectively except through the action of the National Government.

Let national aid to education be supplied not as a national condescension or charity, but as the one final payment of a national obligation, so regarded by payer and payee, and no community will be pauperized. It is absurd to fear that the payment of a just debt, and its payment in *education*, is going to pauperize a community and make it content to bring up the next generation in ignorance. It is hardly convincing to draw large inferences from small examples in exceptional communities, as has been done too frequently in this debate. Our whole wide knowledge of human history and human nature makes it axiomatic, that a free and educated generation under self-government will not fail to educate its children at its own cost.

We need to make one distinction very plain here—between adults and children. To bestow a professional education gratuitously upon an adult certainly does have some tendency to pauperize him, for it puts advantages of life into his

hands at a lower price than *manhood* ought to pay. But the case of a child in school is just the reverse. Under gratuitous aid he still gets education at no abatement of price to *him*, but finds himself, instead, filled with needs which call forth his finest manhood to supply. Let the nation pay its debt of public education to Southern illiteracy in one generation of school children. It is true that the Southern States could do more for public education if they would, and he is no friend of the South who flatters her people into the delusion that they are doing all they can. To show this, one need only compare these States with the new States and Territories of the West, where the people invest not only much more *per capita* of school population, but a very much larger proportion of their taxable wealth, even when they are poorer and more preoccupied in establishing the preliminary framework of society, and are burdened with a constant inflow of alien immigrants. In short, they treat public education as the very first of preferred claims. But the supreme fact is not that the South is or is not doing all it can for education. It is that hundreds and thousands of children, white and black, as the result of the nation's crime, of which they are only the innocent victims, are growing up in an ignorance more

pauperizing than education, however paid for. To those who rest their argument against national aid upon isolated examples in an exceptional State here and there, we might ask one question: Which are the paupers, the tens of thousands who have received Northern aid and even remote individual aid, the most hazardous of all aids, or those who have grown up in ignorance without it? Is it not the fact that most parts of the South have learned the value and applied the lesson of public education from the aid, gratuitous as to them, of Northern missionary societies? I do not consider the education of the lower masses in the South a cure for all the ills of Southern society, but I fail to see how they can be cured without it, and I fail to see any excellence in the policy that is content to withhold it.

But, again, our national scheme, in recognizing the right of every man to vote as a necessary part of the universal right of self-government, forces upon us, as a correspondingly imperative public necessity, to see that no part of the public mass is left without the means to vote intelligently. The one idea stands for freedom, the other for safety.

I am not of those who consider that when the nation enfranchised the Negro it created a new

danger. The range of history, even within our own times, gives proof enough that the illiterate Negro is neither as dangerous nor as much feared enfranchised as he was enslaved. But I do insist that enfranchisement—which my mind emphatically approves—was only half the essential national provision for permanent safety. In other words, I recognize civil freedom as an element of public safety, not danger, yet an inadequate element demanding the establishment and maintenance of intelligence to complete the provision.

To pay the world what it had borrowed, was one part of the nation's obligation. To liberate bodily, politically and civilly the slave, was and is another. There are others. But to loose the bonds of the Negro's ignorance is still another. To banquet, toast and embrace the men who conscientiously fought for the destruction of the Union and the perpetuation of slavery is generous, inspiring and largely admirable; but it pays no part of the national debt to either side; and I sincerely believe that North and South would think more of one another if one common, noble sentiment would recognize the fact that feasting and embracing cannot of themselves pay the debts of either party. Let us have the banquet, by all means; but let us have the wedding first and the banquet afterward.

Whatever we say with regard to illiteracy of blacks in the South applies to the illiteracy of whites also, since they are both the fruit of the same tree, whose root drew its nourishment from a moral error as wide as the nation. Let us be constitutional; but I think no reasonable mind will doubt that when the nation recognizes this matter as a national debt, it will find or will make a constitutional way to mend it.

We are told by the opponents of national aid to education that it would incur the risk of pauperizing the communities aided; but surely we cannot run a more glaring risk than to go on leaving the reduction of an enormous mass of illiteracy to communities that believe themselves, and are widely believed, to be doing all they can, while they are hardly performing half the entire bulk of the task. There is not in the range of our choice any condition or possible attitude free from risks, and the maxim is as true in politics and government as in commerce and finance—"Nothing venture, nothing have." Another maxim is to the point, that "Forewarned is forearmed." And certainly all hazards in national aid would be reduced to trivial proportions when made conditional upon at least the full maintenance of the present degree of self-help supplied by the States themselves.

WHAT SHALL THE NEGRO DO?

1. This paper is addressed directly to the colored people of the United States. A large mass of them, of course, will not see it; yet others of them will. Nothing more forcibly illustrates the great progress of our times than the fact that already one may safely count on reaching a considerable body of readers, wholly or partly of Negro blood, through the pages of a monthly publication adapted to the highest popular intelligence of the Anglo-Saxon race. The explanation of this is, that although the colored man in America enters the second quarter-century of his emancipation without yet having attained the full measure of American freedom decreed to him, he has, nevertheless, enjoyed, for at least twenty years, a larger share of private, public, religious and political liberty than falls to the lot of any but a few peoples—the freest in the world.

It would be far from the truth to say that other men everywhere, or even that all white men, are freer than he. No subject of the Czar, be he peasant or prince, however rich in *privileges*, dares claim the *rights* actually enjoyed by an American freedman. The Negro's grievance is

not that his liberties are few; it is that, in a land and nation whose measure of every man's freedom is all the freedom any one can attain without infringing upon a like freedom in others, and where all the competitions of life are keyed on this idea, his tenure of almost every public right is somehow mutilated by arbitrary discriminations against him. Not that he is in slave's shackles and between prison walls, or in a Russian's danger of them, but that, being entered in the race for the prize of American citizenship, in accordance with all the rules of the course, and being eager to run, he is first declared an inferior competitor, and then, without gain to any, but with only loss to all, is handicapped and hobbled.

Without gain to any and with loss to all. For in this contest no one truly wins by another's loss; no one need lose by another's gain; the prize is for every one that reaches the goal, and the more winners there are the better for each and all. The better public citizen the Negro can be the better it will be for the white man. But the Negro's grievance is, that the discriminations made against him are more and more unbearable the better public citizen he is or tries to be; that they are impediments, not to the grovelings of his lower nature, but to the aspirations

of his higher; that as long as he is content to travel and lodge as a ragamuffin, frequent the vilest places of amusement, laze about the streets, shun the public library and the best churches and colleges, and neglect every political duty of his citizenship, no white man could be much freer than he finds himself; but that the farther he rises above such life as this the more he is galled and tormented with ignominious discriminations made against him as a public citizen, both by custom and by law; and finally, that as to his mother, his wife, his sister, his daughter, these encouragements to ignoble, and discouragements to nobler, life are only crueler in their case than in his own.

2. What large enjoyment of rights, with what strange suffering of wrongs! Yet to explain the incongruity is easy; the large enjoyment of rights belongs to a new order of things, which has only partly driven out the old order, of which these wrongs are, by comparison, but a slender remnant. To explain is easy, but to remove, to remove these sad and profitless wrongs, what shall the nation do?

There are many answers. We are reminded of what the nation has done, and the record is a great one. For forty years of this nineteenth century, one of whose years counts for a score

of any other century's, it made the condition of the Negro the absorbing national question, to which it sacrificed its peace and repose. Admitting much intermixture of motives of selfish power and of self-preservation, yet the fundamental matter was a moral conviction that moved the majority of the nation to refuse to hold slaves or countenance slave-holding by State legislation. To have waived this conviction would have avoided a frightful civil war. The freedom of the Negro was bought at a higher price, in white men's blood and treasure, than any people ever paid, of their own blood and treasure, for their own liberty. Since the close of the war, many millions of dollars have been spent by private benevolence in the North to qualify the Southern Negro, morally and intellectually, for his new freedom, and the outlay continues still undiminished. No equal number of people elsewhere on earth receives so great an amount of missionary educational aid. In the South itself a great change has taken—is taking—place in popular sentiment concerning certain aspects of the Negro's case. In 1885–86 over 58 per cent. of the colored school population in seven great Southern States were enrolled in State public schools, in recognition of the necessity and advantage of the Negro's elevation.

These things are not enumerated to remind the Negro of his obligations. His property, as far as it goes, is taxed equally with the white man's for public education and the maintenance of the State; and all the benefactions he has received, added to all the peculations of which he stood accused in the days of his own misrule, are not yet equal to the just dues of a darker past still remaining, and that must ever remain, unpaid to him. They are enumerated not to exhaust the record, but merely to indicate the range of what has been done in the past, and is being done in the present, by white men concerning the Negro's rights and wrongs. The great national political party that first rose to power, and for almost a quarter of a century held governmental control, by its espousal and maintenance of the Negro's cause, still declares that cause a living issue in the national interest. The great party now in power,* with one or more disaffected wings from the opposition, though it does not propose to do anything, as to the Negro, that has thus far been left undone, at least consents not to undo anything that has been done. Yet other important issues have been pushed to the front by both parties, and the "Negro ques-

* The Democratic Party, 1887.

tion," however preëminent in the nation's true interest, is not paramount in the public attention.

But what has the Negro done? What is he doing? The trite answer is, that he has increased from four millions to seven, and is still multiplying faster by natural increase than any other race on the continent. But, also, he has accepted his freedom in the spirit of those who bestowed it; that is, limited by, and only by, the civil and political rights and duties of American citizenship equally devoid of special privileges and special restrictions. He fought in no mean numbers in the great army that achieved his liberation, and he has laid down, since then, many a life rather than waive the rights guaranteed to him by the American Constitution. In the infancy of his citizenship, steeped in moral and intellectual ignorance, with some of his former masters disfranchised and the rest opposed to almost the whole list of his civil rights, he fell into the arms of unscrupulous leaders and covered not a few pages of history with a record of atrociously corrupt government; yet, as the present writer has lately asserted elsewhere, the freedman never by legislation removed the penalties from anything that the world at large calls a crime, and here it may be added that he never

put upon the statute book a law hostile to the universal enjoyment of American liberty. In the darkest day of his power he established the public school system. He has exceeded expectation in his display of industry, his purchase of land, his accumulation of wealth, his eagerness and capability for education, and even in his political intelligence and parliamentary skill. Even under the artificial and undiscriminating pressure of public caste he is developing social ranks with wide moral and intellectual differences, from the stupid, idle, criminal, and painfully numerous minority at the bottom, to a wealth-holding, educated minority at the top; each emerging, or half emerging, from a huge middle majority of peace-keeping, but uneducated and unskilled farmers, mechanics, and laborers, yet a majority unestranged from the more cultured and prosperous minority of their own race by any differences of religion, conflict of traditions, or rivalry of capital and labor, and hearkening to their counsels more tractably than the mass listens to the few among any other people on the continent. He is not open to the charges urged against the Indian or the Chinamen; he does not choose to be a savage, as the one, nor a civil alien and a heathen, as the other, is supposed to choose. He accepts education, sometimes under offensive,

and sometimes under expensive, conditions He proposes to stay in this country, and is eager to be in all things a citizen. His religion is Christianity; and if it is often glaringly emotional and superficial, so, confessedly, is the Christianity of his betters the world over. He only shares the fault, after all, in large and gross degree, amply explained by his past and present conditions; and in many leading features a description of his faith and practice, worship and works, would differ but little from the history of religion among our white settlers of the Mississippi Valley scarcely seventy-five years ago.

3. Thus far has the nation come, and in view of these developments the old but still anxious question, What shall be done with the Negro? makes room beside it for this: What shall the Negro do? For, as matters stand, it seems only too probable that until the Negro does something further, nothing further will be done. And, indeed, are not the times and the question saying, themselves, by mute signs, that the day has come when the Negro, not the rice-field savage, but you, the educated, the law-abiding, tax-paying Negro, must push more strenuously to the front in his—in your—own behalf, and thus in the behalf of all your race in the land? In particular, then, What can—what shall—the Negro do?

You can make the most of the liberty you have. You have large liberty of speech, much freedom of the press, of petition, of organization, of public meeting, liberty to hold property, to prosecute civil and criminal lawsuits, a perfect freedom to use the mails, and a certain—or must we say an uncertain—freedom of the ballot. All these are inestimable liberties, and have been, and are being, used by you. But are they being used faithfully to their utmost extent?

Freedom of public organization, for instance. From the earliest days of his emancipation the Negro has shown a zest and gift for organization, and to-day his private, public, and secret societies, which cost him money to maintain, have thousands of members. Yet only here and there among them is there a club or league for the advocacy and promotion of his civil rights. There is probably no other great national question so nearly destitute of the championship of an active national organization, with officers, treasury, and legal counsel. The causes of this are plain enough. As long as it was the supreme political issue it was left, after our American fashion, entirely to the heated treatment of the daily press, the stump, and the national and State legislatures. From them a large part of the question passed into a long period of

suspense in the Supreme Court. Only the matter of casting and counting votes kept, and keeps, the attention of parties, and this with a constant loss of power, showing that partisan treatment is no longer the question's only or chief need.

In the politics of a great nation even the greatest questions must take their turns, according as now one and now another gains the lead in the public attention, and the more sagaciously and diligently any worthy question is pressed to the front by the forces that dictate to the daily press, the stump, and the national and State legislatures, the sooner and oftener will its turn come round to lay uppermost hold upon the national conscience and policy. There always was good reason, but now there is the greatest need, that you give and get this kind of backing for the question of your civil and political rights. We say give and get, because every endeavor should be used to secure by personal solicitation not the condescension—there has been enough of that—but the friendly countenance and active coöperation of white men well known in their communities for intelligence and integrity. A certain local civil rights club of colored men that had thought this impracticable at length tried it, and soon numbered among its active members some of the

best white citizens of its town. And naturally, for it declared only such aims as any good citizen ought gladly to encourage and aid any other to seek by all lawful means.*

You can as urgently claim the liberty to perform all your civil duties as the liberty to enjoy all your civil rights. The two must be sought at the same time and by the same methods. They should never be divided. You must feel and declare yourself no longer the nation's, much less any political party's, still less your old master's, mere nursling; but one bound by the duties of citizenship to study, and actively to seek, all men's rights, and the public welfare of

---

* After stating that any adult male citizen of the United States may become a member, it declares its object to be "to foster and promote, by every lawful use of the pen, the press, the mails, the laws, and the courts, by public assemblage and petition, and by all proper stimulation of public sentiment: 1. Both the legal and the conventional recognition, establishment, and protection of all men in the common rights of humanity and of all citizens of the United States in the full enjoyment of every civil right, without distinction on account of birth, race, or private social status. 2. The like recognition of every man's inviolable right to select and reject his social companions and acquaintances according to his own private pleasure and conscience, limited in the family relationship only by laws made under the full enjoyment of equal civil rights throughout the whole community coming under such laws; and in the social circle only by the same inviolable right in others."

the nation, and of every lesser community—State, county, city, village—to which he belongs. Nothing else can so hasten the acquisition of all your rights as for you to make it plain that your own rights and welfare are not all you are striving for, but that you are, at least equally with the white man, the student of your individual duty toward every public question in the light of the general good.

Holding this attitude, you can make many things clear, concerning the cause of civil rights, that greatly need to be made so. For instance, that this cause is not merely yours, but is a great fundamental necessity of all free government, in which every American citizen is interested, knowing that they who neglect to defend any principle of liberty may well expect to lose its substance.

Or, for another instance, that the demand for equal civil, including political, rights is by no means a demand for supremacy, much less for the supremacy of one race over another.

Or, again, that this demand is not for a share in the popular power by a mass knowing and caring nothing about the popular welfare.

Or, yet again, that it is not the demand of an irresponsible herd deaf to the counsels of its own intelligent few and of any other.

Or, that the demand for equal unpolitical civil rights is not a demand that public indecency and unrespectability shall enjoy all the rights of decency and respectability, but that mere color be not made the standard of public decency and respectability.

Or, that equality in these unpolitical civil rights is urged, not for the difference in comfort, but for the effect upon the inward character of those qualified to enjoy it, and for its power to awaken, even in those yet without them, aspirations that should not be lacking in the mind of any citizen.

Or, lastly, you can make it clear that the Negro is not the morally and mentally nerveless infant he was fifteen years ago.

But there is a negative side to what the Negro may do.

4. You can proclaim what you do not want. We have already implied this in what goes just before. There are tens of thousands of intelligent people who to-day unwittingly exaggerate the demands made by and in behalf of the Negro into a vast and shapeless terror. Neither he, his advocates, nor his opponents have generally realized how widely his claims have been, sometimes by and sometimes without intention, misconstrued. He needs still to make innumerable

reiterations of facts that seem to him too plain for repetition; as, for example, that he does not want "Negro supremacy," or any supremacy save that of an intelligent and upright minority, be it white, black or both, ruling, out of office, by the sagacity of their counsels and their loyalty to the common good, and in office by the choice of the majority of the whole people; that, as to private society, he does not want any man's company who does not want his; or that, as to suffrage, he does not want to vote solidly, unless he must in order to maintain precious rights and duties denied to, and only to, him and all his.

There is another thing which the Negro must learn to say, and feel, that he does not want. It is hard for a white man to name it, for it is principally the fault of white men that it is hard for the Negro to say it. It is our—the white man's —fault that the only even partial outlet for the colored man from a menial public status, in the eyes of the white man, is political office. Even when he attains a learned profession he attains no such consideration as he gains in political office, superficial and tawdry though it be. Yet, self-regard has grown; scholarly callings win for him more and more regard from both whites and blacks; in the whole national mind the idea has

wonderfully grown—scarcely current at all when the Negro began his political life—that public office is not the legitimate spoils of party and the legitimate reward of mere partisan loyalty and activity, to be apportioned, *pro rata*, to each and every race, class, and clique among the partisan victors; and the time has come when the Negro, for his own interest, must learn to say: "My full measure of citizenship I must and will have; but I yield no right of public office or emolument to any man because he is white, nor claim any because I am black; and I do not want any office that does not want me." Such an attitude will win better rewards than the keeping of doors and sweeping of corridors.

But it is equally important to say that there are other things for the Negro to do that must by no means be either negative or passive.

5. You must keep your vote alive. This means several things. It means that, without venality or servility, you must hold your vote up for the honorable competitive bid of political parties. A vote which one party can count on, as a matter of course, and the opposite party cannot hope to win at any price, need expect nothing from either. In no campaign ought the Negro to know *certainly* how he will vote before he has seen both platforms and weighed the chances of their

words being made good. You will never get your rights until the white man does not know how you are going to vote. You must let him see that the "Negro vote" can divide whenever it may, and come together solidly again whenever it must.

Keeping your vote alive means, also, that while to be grateful is right and to be ungrateful is base, you must nevertheless stop voting for gratitude. The debts of gratitude are sacred, but no unwise vote can lighten them. A vote is not a free-will offering to the past; it is a debt to the present.

Again, keeping your vote alive means voting on all questions. What makes great parties if it be not the combination of men of various political interests consenting to concern themselves in one another's aims and claims for the better promotion of those designs in the order of their urgency and practicability? Now, here is the Negro charged, at least, with rarely—almost never—making himself seen or heard in any widespread interest except his own. Small wonder if other men do not more hotly insist upon his vote being cast and counted. The Negro may be not the first or principal one to blame in this matter, but he is largely the largest loser.

Last, keeping the vote alive means casting it.

You must vote. You must practically recognize two facts, which if white men had not recognized in their own case long ago, you would be in slavery still to-day: that there is an enormous value in having votes cast; first, even though they cannot win; and, secondly, even though they are not going to be counted. A good cause and a stubborn fight are a combination almost as good as victory itself; better than victory without them; the seed of certain victory at last. Even if you have to cope with fraud, make it play its infamous part so boldly and so fast that it shall work its own disgrace and destruction, as many a time it has done before negroes ever voted. Vote! Cast your vote though taxed for it. Cast your vote though defrauded of it, as many a white man is to-day. Cast your vote though you die for it. Let no man cry, "Liberty or blood;" leave that for Socialists and Parisian mobs; but when liberty means duty, and death means one's own extinction, then the cry of "Liberty or death" is a holy cry, and the man who will not make it his own, even in freedom is not free. Seek not to buy liberty with the blood either of friends or of enemies; it is only men's own blood at last that counts in the purchase of liberty. Whatever may have been the true philosophy for more ferocious times,

this is the true philosophy for ours. Cast your votes, then, even though many of you die for it. Some of you have died, but in comparison how few; three hundred thousand white men poured out their blood to keep you bound, other three hundred thousand died to set you free, and still the full measure of American freedom is not yours. A fiftieth as much of your own blood shed in the inoffensive activities of public duty will buy it. Keep your vote alive; better nine free men than ten half free. In most of the Southern States the negro vote has been diminishing steadily for years, to the profound satisfaction of those white men whose suicidal policy is to keep you in alienism. In the name of the dead, black and white, of the living, and of your children yet unborn, not as of one party or another, but as American freemen, vote! For in this free land the people that do not vote do not get and do not deserve their rights.

6. And you must spend your own money. No full use of the liberties you now have can be made without coöperation, however loose that coöperation may have to be; and no coöperation can be very wide, active, or effective without the use of money. This tax cannot be laid anywhere upon a few purses. Falling upon many, it will rest too lightly to be counted a burden. White

men may and should help to bear it; but if so, then all the more the Negro must spend his own money. Half the amount now idled away on comparatively useless societies and secret orders will work wonders.

Money is essential, especially for two matters. First, for the stimulation, publication, and wide distribution of a literature of the facts, equities, and exigencies of the negro question in all its practical phases. This would naturally include a constant and diligent keeping of the whole question pruned clear of its dead matter. From nothing else has the question suffered so much, at the hands both of friends and of foes, as from lack of this kind of attention. And, secondly, money is essential for the unofficial, unpartisan, prompt, and thorough investigation and exposure of crimes against civil and political rights.

You must press the contest for equal civil rights and duties in your separate States. The claim need by no means be abated that the national government has rights and duties in the matter that have not yet been fully established; but for all that you can urge the question's recognition in State political platforms, and, having made your vote truly and honorably valuable to all parties, can bestow it where there is largest prospect of such recognition being carried into

legislation and such legislation being carried into effect.

There is a strong line of cleavage already running through the white part of the population in every Southern State. On one side of this line the trend of conviction is toward the establishment of the common happiness and security through the uplifting of the whole people by the widest possible distribution of moral effects and wealth-producing powers. It favors, for example, the expansion of the public-school system, and is strongest among men of professional callings and within sweep of the influence of colleges and universities. It antagonizes such peculiar institutions as the infamous convict-lease system, with that system's enormous political powers. It condemns corrupt elections at home or abroad. It revolts against the absolutism of political parties. In a word, it stands distinctively for the New South of American ideas, including the idea of material development, as against a New South with no ideas except that of material development for the aggrandizement of the few, and the holding of the whole Negro race in the South to a servile public status, cost what it may to justice, wealth, or morals. Let the Negro, in every State and local issue, strive with a dauntless perseverance intelligently, justly, and honorably to make

his vote at once too cheap and too valuable for the friends of justice and a common freedom to despise it or allow their enemies to suppress it. Remember, your power in the nation at large must always be measured almost entirely by your power in your own State.

And, finally, you must see the power and necessity of individual thought and action. It is perfectly natural that the Negro, his history being what it is, should magnify the necessity of coöperating in multitudinous numbers to effect any public result. He has not only been treated, but has treated himself too much, as a mere mass. While he has too often lacked in his organized efforts that disinterested zeal, or even that semblance of it which far-sighted shrewdness puts on, to insure wide and harmonious coöperation, he has, on the other hand, overlooked the power of the individual and the necessity of individual power to give power to numbers.

You rightly think it atrocious that you should lose your vote by its fraudulent suppression. But what can your vote when counted procure you? Legislation? Probably. But what can legislation procure you if it is contrary to public sentiment? And how are public sentiment and action, in the main, shaped? By the supremacy of individual minds; by the powers of intellect,

will, argument, and persuasion vested by nature in a few individuals here and there, holding no other commission but these powers, and every such individual worth from a hundred to a hundred thousand votes. Without this element and without its recognition there is little effective power even in organized masses. Do not wait for the mass to move. The mass waits for the movement of that individual who cannot and will not wait for the mass. You may believe your powers to be, or they may actually be, humble; but even so, there are all degrees of leadership and need of all degrees. There is work to be done which it is not in the nature of violence or votes or any mere mass power, organized or unorganized, to accomplish.

An attempt has been made here to enumerate a few of its prominent features. They are things that the Negro can do so profitably and honorably to all, of whatever race, class, or region, that no white citizen can justly refuse his public, active coöperation. The times demand these things. The changes already going on in the South are just what call for promptness and vigor in this work, for they mark the supreme opportunity that lies in a formative stage of public affairs. What will the Negro do?

A SIMPLER SOUTHERN QUESTION.

I. To bring any public question fairly into the open field of literary debate is always a long step toward its final adjustment. It is across that field that the question must go to be so purged of its irrelevancies, misinterpretations, and misuses, personal, partisan, or illogical, and so clarified and simplified, as to make it easy for the popular mind to take practical and final action on it and settle it once for all by settling it right.

It is in this field that the Negro problem still forces itself to the front as a living and urgent national question. Such distinguished and honored men as Messrs. Hampton, Chandler, Colquitt, Foraker, Halstead, Edmunds, and Watterson are engaged in its debate, and in the October (1888) number of the *Forum* Senator Eustis writes that "this Negro question is still a running sore in our body politic," and that among the problems of this country it "promises to be the most serious of all," and "is still far from being solved."

Now, it is only fair to assume that each and all the writers who have turned aside from the more effective partisan media of the daily news-

paper, legislative halls, the public platform, and the "stump," to the pages of the magazines and reviews, have done so in the desire to help the question along toward its final solution by aiding to make it in each case clearer and simpler than it was before. If so, then we may assume also that writers, editors, and readers will not repel an effort, if it be intelligent and sincere, to gather from several of these writers' utterances some conclusive replies to questions whose answer and removal from the debate will greatly reduce the intricacies of the problem.

II. Can the Southern question be solved? There are men in the North and South, who say no, and, without being at all able to tell what they mean by the phrase, think it must be "left to solve itself." But careful thinkers, on either side of the question, never so reply. Their admission, whether tacit or expressed, is that "can be" is out of the debate; it *must be* solved. It is a running, not a self-healing sore; one of those great problems "whose solution," as Mr. Eustis says, "strains the bonds of society and taxes the wisest statesmanship;" that kind of problems with some one of which "every nation must deal." *We* must solve it.

Is it being solved? We look in vain for any one's direct yes or no. Governor Colquitt seems

to come nearest to the distinct affirmation when he says: "A sense of moral and religious responsibility is restraining and directing us in our State polity and practice; and . . . I think we have had more than an average success in discharging the obligations imposed upon us." Among these he includes pointedly the assuring of the Negro in the full enjoyment of his political rights. But setting out to speak for the South, he speaks in fact only for Georgia, and makes no plain claim that, even so, the Negro question in Georgia is really being pushed toward its settlement. On the other hand, when Senator Chandler says: "The political control of the United States is now in the hands of a Southern oligarchy as persistent and relentless as was that which plunged the nation into the slaveholders' rebellion;" and when Senator Eustis falls short only by a slender "if" of the blunt assertion that "the Negro problem still exists in its original relations," these gentlemen surely are not to be understood as implying that the question has made or is making no advance toward solution. Both of them yield a recognition of facts which make it unreasonable so to construe their meaning. In truth, it is indisputable facts that we need from which to draw our final answer to this important query, rather than

any person's or any multitude of persons' general assurances or ever so profound beliefs. And for some such facts we are indebted to these gentlemen as well as to others.

III. The Negro question is three-quarters of a century old. Within that period a vast majority of the nation have totally changed their convictions as to what are the Negro's public rights. Within that period the sentiment of every community and the laws of every State in the Union, as well as the Federal Government, have been radically altered concerning him. In their dimensions, in their scope, in their character, the problem's original relations have passed through a great and often radical change. So far from the problem still existing in its original relations, only two or three of those original relations any longer exist. Within the memory of men still in active life there was not a foot of soil under the American flag where a Negro detected fleeing from slavery was safe from violence. Now, it is several months since it was asserted in the *Forum** that the Negro in the United States "has enjoyed for at least twenty years a larger share of private, public, religious and political liberty than falls to the lot of any but a few people—the

---

*See "What Shall the Negro Do?" Page 66.

freest in the world," and thus far no writer, black or white, has challenged the statement. And the vast changes that have been effected—not by time, mark it, but by men, sometimes at peril, sometimes at cost, of their lives, in Northern States as well as in Southern—have been very uniformly in the direction of the great problem's simplification and solution. The problem is being solved; slowly, through the years, it is true; in pain, in sweat, in blood, with many a mistake, many a discouragement, many an enemy, and, saddest of all, many a neutral friend in North and South; yet it is being solved, and it is only by misconceiving the motive of those who have effected these changes that Mr. Eustis, for instance, can call the long, fruitful and still persistent and determined effort an "unsuccessful experiment." For it is not, and never has been, an effort "to balance or equalize the condition of the white and Negro races in this country," but only to balance or equalize their enjoyment of their public and political rights, to establish a common and uniform public justice and equity, and trust the untrammeled selections of private society and "the laws of nature and nature's God" still to maintain all proper equalities and inequalities of race and condition. The fact must be admitted by all fair minds to be estab-

lished and removed from debate, that in some aspects, at least, the Negro problem's "original" relations are altered, when men like Governor Colquitt, men in the front ranks of political life, their political fortunes largely dependent on what they say, eagerly choose to deny with indignation that either they or their constituents, in States where once it was against the law to teach a colored child to read, now either practice or believe in the entire or partial suppression of the Negro vote, and as eagerly boast—with statistical figures to back them—that their public schools are educating twice as many thousands of colored youth now as they were educating hundreds fifteen years ago. True, there are men in the South who talk very differently. Aye, and in the North, too. When there are none such left in the Southern States they will be far ahead, at least of where the Northern are now, toward the whole question's final solution.

IV. One of the most conclusive proofs that the changes that have been made in the Negro's *status* have been generally in the direction of true progress, is that wherever and whenever these changes have been made complete and operative, opposition to them has disappeared and they have dropped out of the main problem, leaving it by so much the lighter and simpler.

The most notable instance, of course, is the abolition of slavery; but there are many lesser examples in the history of both Northern and Southern States: the teaching of Negroes in private schools; their admission into public schools; their sitting on juries; their acceptance as court witnesses; their riding in street cars; their enlistment in the militia; their appointment on the police, etc. It is a fact worthy of more consideration than it gets from the debaters on either side of the Negro question, that such changes as these, which nobody finds any reason for undoing in any place where they have been fully established, were, until they were made, as fiercely opposed and esteemed as dishonorable, humiliating, unjust, and unsafe to white men and women, as those changes which, in many regions of our country, not all of them Southern, still remain to be made before the Negro question will let itself be dismissed. This fact no one will dispute. Yet thousands shut their eyes and ears, or let others shut them, to the equal though not as salient truth of this fact's corollary, to wit: that every step toward the perfecting of one common public liberty for all American citizens is opposed and postponed only where it never has been fairly tried.

Even the various public liberties intended to

be secured to all men alike by the Civil Rights Bill have rarely if ever, in any place, been actually secured and made operative and afterward withdrawn and lost. Only where they have been merely legalized and not practically established, but bitterly fought and successfully nullified throughout reconstruction days, have they since been unlegalized, condemned, and falsely proclaimed to have been fairly tried and found wanting. The infamous Glenn bill, in the Georgia legislature, may be thrust before us by debaters of the passionate sort on either side as a glaring exception; but its fate, its final suffocation, makes it more an example than an exception, even though this was effected by a compromise which will hardly be brought forward as evidence of "a sensibility of honor that would 'feel a stain like a wound.'"*

V. But the Negro vote. Surely, many will say, that was abundantly tried, and earned its own condemnation in the corruptions and disasters of the reconstruction period. Now this would be a fair statement only if the ultimate purpose of the reconstruction scheme had been simply to secure the Negro in his right to vote. We shall see that it was not. Much less was it

---

* Governor Colquitt, in the *Forum*, November, 1887.

to establish, to use Senator Hampton's phrase, "the political supremacy of the Negro," or, as Mr. Watterson charges, to erect "a black oligarchy at the South," or, as Governor Colquitt puts it, "to Africanize the States of the South." These definitions belong—to borrow again Mr. Watterson's thought—to the hysterics of the question. That fervid writer more than half refutes the charge when he follows it closely with the assertion that "the scheme was preposterous in its failure to recognize the simplest operation of human nature upon human affairs, and in its total lack of foresight." But surely, whatever may be said of Sumner, Stevens, and the men who gathered around them, they were not a herd of perfect fools with a "total lack of foresight." Not the scheme was, but the charge that this was the scheme is, "preposterous." The scheme included the establishment of the Negro in his right to vote; but its greater design was, as we have stated in an earlier paper,* "to put race rule of all sorts under foot, and set up the common rule of all," or rather "the consent of all to the rule of a minority the choice of the majority, frequently appealed to without respect of persons." As to the Negro in particular, the design,

---

*THE NEGRO QUESTION; pages 40, 41.

even at its extreme, was to enable him—and here we are indebted to Mr. Eustis for a phrase —"to share with the white man the political responsibility of governing;" or, more exactly, the political responsibility of choosing governors. This scheme was never allowed a fair trial in any of the once seceding States. Every effort to give it such was powerfully opposed by one great national political party throughout the whole Union, "while"—to quote again from the same earlier paper—"the greater part of the wealth and intelligence of the region directly involved held out sincerely, steadfastly, and desperately against it and for the preservation of unequal public privileges and class domination." "We thought we saw," says Governor Colquitt, speaking for that Southern wealth and intelligence for which he has so large a right to speak, "a determined effort so completely to Africanize," etc. But Senator Eustis, who also has his right to speak for them, treats that thought as an absurdity worthy only the utterance of "that foul bird of prey, the carpet-bagger," who, he writes, "encouraged the *deluded Negro* to believe that the Federal Government intended that he should govern the white race in the South." The thought *was* an absurdity; an absurdity so

palpable that an intelligent people must have rejected it but for the conviction behind it that, whatever might be the experiment's design, "Negro supremacy" would be the result. And here Messrs. Eustis, Colquitt, Hampton, and the rest seem to agree. This seems to be the potential conviction of all who speak or write on that side of the debate; and we dwell upon the fact because it furnishes such weighty evidence of the entire truth of our earlier statement that this conviction, this fear, is the whole tap-root of the Negro question to-day. Man elsewhere may hold some conjectural belief in "race antagonisms," or even in their divine appointment. Nowhere in the world do the laws forbid a man this belief. In every land, be it Massachusetts, Martinique, or Sierra Leone, he may indulge it to his heart's content in every private relation. It is only where a people are moved by the fear of "Negro supremacy" that the simple *belief* in a divinely ordered race antagonism is used to justify the withholding of impersonal public rights which belong to every man because he is a man, and with which race and its real or imagined antagonisms have nothing whatever to do. It is only under that fear that men stand up before the intelligent and moral world saying,

"If this instinct does not exist it is necessary to invent it."* There is a Negro question which belongs to private society and morals and to the individual conscience: the question what to do to and with the Negro within that realm of our own private choice where public law does not and dare not come. But the Negro question which appeals to the Nation, to the laws, and to legislation, is only, and is bound to be only, the question of public—civil and political—rights. Mr. Eustis says truly, "Our plain duty should be not to make its solution more difficult;" but when he occupies eleven pages of the *Forum* with a recriminative entanglement of these two matters, one entirely within, the other entirely beyond, the province of legislation, he is wasting his own and his readers' time and impeding the solution of the *public* question; and we here challenge him, or any writer of his way of thinking, to show from the pen of any Negro of national reputation, Douglass, Lynch, Bruce, Downing, Williams, Grimke, Matthews, Fortune, or any other, anything but their repudiation of this —blind, let us believe, rather than wilful—attempt to make a "Siamese union," as Mr. Glad-

* See *Century Magazine*, April, 1885, page 911, "In Plain Black and White," by H. W. Grady.

stone would say, between these two distinct issues. As far as it is or of right can be a municipal, State, inter-State, or national problem at all, the question to-day, pruned of all its dead wood, is this: Shall the Negro, individually, enjoy equally, and only equally, with the white man individually, that full measure of an American citizen's public rights, civil and political, decreed to him both as his and as an essential to the preservation of equal rights between the States; or shall he be compelled to abandon these inalienable human rights to the custody of Mr. Eustis's exclusively "white man's government," and "rely implicitly upon the magnanimity of his white fellow-citizens of the South to treat him with the justice and generosity due to his unfortunate condition?" Shall or shall not this second choice be forced upon him for fear that otherwise these seven (million) black and lean kine may, so to speak, devour the twelve (million) white, fat kine, and "the torches of Caucasian civilization be extinguished" in the South, despite the "race antagonism" of the most powerful fifty-three million whites on earth? Is it not almost time for a really intrepid people to be getting ashamed of such a fear.* But that

* For a special consideration of the question of "race instinct," and the maintenance of the color line, see the short article printed supplementary to this.

this fear is the main root of the whole Southern problem is further proved by the fact that no speaker or writer on that side of the debate, North or South, ever denies it. And neither does any attempt to prove that it is well grounded. Like Senator Hampton, all these debaters content themselves with the absurd assumption that the peaceable enjoyment, by the white man and the Negro, of an equal and common civil and political citizenship was fairly tried in the reconstruction period, and that "a large class at the North" have believed in and still want "Negro supremacy" wherever the Negro is in the majority. Challenged to actual argument, they are silent, until some one asks some subordinate question: Is the Negro contented and prosperous? Is he allowed to vote? Is his vote fairly counted? Has he all his civil rights? Are outbreaks due to political causes? Then their answers are abundant again; and as final proof that not these, but the earlier question, is truly the main issue now, there are scarcely any two who do not contradict themselves and one another.

VI. The least discordance of statement on these minor points is on that of "race antagonism." And for the obvious reason that, attributed to the Negro, who always denies it, it excuses the

bald assumption that no matter what he says, he must want to establish a "black oligarchy;" while, attributed to the white race, it excuses the theory that the white man cannot even by way of experiment give the black man white men's rights, because natural instinct will not let him. "But you must!" says conscience. "But I can't!" says fear. Yet even on this point there is not full concord. Mr. Eustis "believes"—he counts it quite enough to "believe" and needless to prove —that this instinctive antagonism justifies the subjection of the Negro, forcible if need be, to a "white man's government;" while, as far back as 1867, General Hampton "recognized that in a republic such as ours no citizen ought to be excluded from any of the rights of citizenship because of his color or of any other arbitrary distinction." Where was and where is the gentleman's instinctive race antagonism? It is not in his list of necessities. He believed "a large class" was bent on establishing "race supremacy," and if there was to be "race supremacy," then, of course, and naturally enough, it must be the supremacy of the white race, instinct or no instinct; while Mr. Eustis regarded the race-supremacy scheme as a carpet-bagger's lie, and could justify the subjugation of the Negro mainly on the *belief* that to protest against it is "an inso-

lent demand for the revision of the laws of nature." But under neither philosophy does the Negro get a white man's public rights.

We find still wider variances on some other points. "Is the Negro vote suppressed?" Messrs. Foraker, Edmunds, Chandler and Halstead still roundly make the charge. But they are all of one party and are human; what is the reply of the other side? Human, too, of course; but it is also what Mr. Silas Wegg might call "human warious." Says Governor Colquitt: "We therefore will not suffer the charge . . . of defrauding the Negro out of his vote to go unchallenged. We deny, as roundly as our enemies make the charge, that the Negro is denied a right to vote."

He speaks for the whole South. He addresses himself to the "alleged suppression of the Negro vote in the South," just as Mr. Watterson addresses himself to "a claim . . . that the Negro vote is suppressed . . . by the white people of the South." True, Governor Colquitt speaks especially for Georgia, but he distinctly offers Georgia as a fair sample of all the Southern States, and claims for the men on "the roll of members elect from Georgia to the next Congress, and in fact that from any other Southern State," "a love of truth and honesty that would

cause them to refuse the presidency if it had to be won by fraud on any one, black or white." And Governor Colquitt ought to know. But who ought to know better than Mr. Watterson? And Mr. Watterson, not some time before, but six months later, writes: "I should be entitled to no respect or credit if I pretended that there is either a fair poll or count of the vast overflow of black votes in States where there is a negro majority, or that in the nature of things present there can be." Now, the worst about these flat contradictions, in a matter confessedly involving the right to the nation's "respect and credit," and to a reputation for "love of truth and honesty," is that they will remain amicably unsettled. Each respondent will sincerely believe what he has stated, and the whole circle of party managers on their side of the issue will go on playing "thimble, thimble," with the tormented question.

Other secondary questions fare no better. Are outbreaks between the two races in the South frequently due to political causes? For twenty years we have heard that they are and that they are not. What says Senator Eustis? He has a divinely ordered race antagonism to assert, and so tells us that, this being the cause, almost anything may be the occasion. "Some sudden unforeseen incident, political, religious, educa-

tional, social, or what not, may at any moment arouse the passions of race hatred and convulse society by the outbreak of race conflicts." To him the real cause of amazement is "that these conflicts are not more frequent and more bloody." Exactly; the race antagonism theory does not half work. What says Governor Colquitt? "Friendly relations habitually exist between our white and black citizens, and are never disturbed except on those occasions when the exigencies of party politics call for an agitation of race prejudices."

VII. Such discrepancies are broad; but they shrink to narrowness when compared with Senator Eustis's contradictions of himself. Is the Negro contented and prospering? There are actually millions of citizens wanting to know. Let Mr. Eustis answer: 1. "His [the Negro's] craving for federal tutorship is still unsatisfied. The white man's patience is to-day taxed as ever by the unending complaints of the Negro and his friends. . . . He still yearns for this fruitless agitation touching his right and his *status*." 2. "This total want of possible assimilation produces antipathy, *quasi* hostility, between the two races, North as well as South," whose manifestations "both races regard as the incidents of a struggle for supremacy and domination." 3.

= in a manner.

"If this [race antagonism] were not the case the Negro would have the right to appeal to the enlightened judgment and to the sense of justice of the American people, to protect him against the unfeeling arrogance and relentless proscription which he has so long endured as the result of the white man's intolerance." 4. "In the South to-day he is happy, contented and satisfied!" Mr. Eustis is almost as violently out of tune with himself as to the Negro's acceptance of his private social *status*, but we shall not quote; the question of the Negro's entrance into private white society, we again protest, is entirely outside the circle of his civil rights. No intelligent advocate of a common enjoyment of all civil rights by both races has argued to the contrary, and the present writer has never written a line in favor of it. As a moral and personal question it admits, no doubt, of public discussion, but as to its connection with any problem of political or civil rights between the two races, all that needs recognition is that it is completely out of that question.

Such is the conflict of testimony from the choicest witnesses on one side of the case. It is a common saying on that side, that communities at a distance cannot understand this Negro problem. The fact is quite overlooked that a

large majority of these communities no great while back held the very same views about it that are still held so largely in the South; and the very feminine argument that opposing debaters "cannot understand" because of "profound ignorance," etc., is only an unconscious way of admitting that one's own side cannot agree upon one full and clear explanation.

Fortunately we need not insist upon uniform answers to these questions. They are secondary. Let us only push on to the problem's main citadel. Whenever it falls all really dependent questions must surrender. And many others; as, for instance, Must the average mental and moral calibre of the whole Negro race in America equal that of the white race, before *any* Negro in a Southern State is entitled to the civil and political standing decreed to all citizens of the United States except the criminal and insane? Or this: Does the Negro throughout the domain of civil rights enjoy impersonal but individual consideration, or is he subjected to a merely class treatment? The nation is tired of contradictory answers to these questions. We can waive them, if only such chosen witnesses as these Southern writers in the *Forum* will answer this: Do you, or your State party, recognize as civil rights, whatever rights belong to any and every person

simply as a unit in the civil community or in any public part of it; and do you advocate the Negro's enjoyment of each and every one of these rights under only and exactly the same protections and limitations he would be under if, just as he is in everything else, he were white? This is not a national party question. The Democratic Party is answering both yea and nay to this in various parts of the Union. The national party question is, whether the federal government may compel the people of a State to answer contrary to their will. We waive that question. Will you, gentlemen, answer the question we ask?

If your answer is that you favor a separated but equivalent enjoyment of civil rights by the two races, consider this: That *equal* civil rights inhere in the *individual* and by virtue of individual conditions and conduct. *Equivalent* civil rights are fictitiously vested in *classes* and without regard to individual conditions or conduct. They cannot be even truly equivalent when substituted for equal civil rights on the ground of the offensiveness of one class to the other and without regard to the conditions and conduct of the individual. Do you not see that such pretended equivalence establishes unequal civil liberties, and do you favor, or do you condemn it?

Or answer a yet simpler question: If a free ballot and a fair count should seem about to decide in your State that *equivalent* civil rights must give place to *equal* civil rights as the two are above defined, would you or your State party protect that free ballot and fair count and stand by its decision?

Look at this question closely. It is not one upon which American political parties can honestly divide. It is the question whether the American government shall or shall not be a government "of the people, by the people, for the people," according to the Constitution's definition of who the people are. We beg to be believed that every word here written is uttered in a spirit of kindness and civil fraternity. We believe that to these two questions a true American loyalty can in calm reflection give but one answer. But we as sincerely believe that these gentlemen on the other side are as honorable and loyal in their intentions and are as sincere lovers of their State's and the nation's common welfare as they certainly are courteous in debate. We trust that loyalty and courtesy for an answer.

WHAT MAKES THE COLOR LINE?

The popular assumption that a certain antagonism between the white and black races is natural, inborn, ineradicable, has never been scientifically proved or disproved. Even if it were, that would not necessarily fix a complete and sufficient rule of conduct. To be governed merely by instincts is pure savagery. All civilization is the result of the subordination of instinct to reason, and to the necessities of peace, amity and righteousness. To surrender to instinct would destroy all civilization in three days. If, then, the color line is the result of natural instincts, the commonest daily needs of the merest civilization require that we should ask ourselves, is it better or worse to repress or cherish this instinct and this color line? Wherein and how far is its repression, or its maintenance, the better? If we decide that in civil and political matters the color line is bad, the next question must be, who makes the color line in politics, and what will break it? The fact is, certain men are continually swinging between two statements: First, that the color line in everything else but politics is an imperative necessity; and,

second, that the color line in politics is the source of all their trouble, and is drawn by the black man, against the white man's choice. But politics is not and cannot be a thing by itself; without the other provinces of life, politics is no more than the ciphers of an arithmetical number. Politics is what we do or propose to do in and for the various relations of public society. So, then, no progress can be made in the solution of Southern troubles until we settle the question, not *who* makes, but *what* makes the color line in politics. For, obviously, one set of people may be compelled to draw a line in politics for which another set of people is morally responsible. But when we settle *what* draws the color line in politics, we are preparing ourselves to say whether the line need be drawn or not. However, to inquire carefully who draws the color line, may be the easiest way to demonstrate *what* draws it. Let us point out the strictly artificial character of certain things, now existing and active, which would compel the drawing of race lines by any race under heaven that might be subjected to them.

Some of these, says a recent Southern writer, are just as strictly of white men's own making as they are artificial. To deny, abridge or jeopardize a negro's right to vote, to hold office, to

sit on jury, or to enjoy any of the public advantages around him on the same terms as others, without any consideration of his own individual values—good, bad or indifferent—except that he is an individual of a certain *race*, is making an entirely artificial and irrelevant use of a limited natural distinction. But, says this writer, the Negroes obtained all these "cardinal and essential rights in spite of our [Southern white men's] most determined and bitter opposition." Speaking as an old citizen of Virginia, he says that the poll-tax as a qualification for voting was a measure aimed solely at the negro, and was finally abolished because it was found to keep more whites than blacks from the polls. In North Carolina, by laws expressly and avowedly enacted for that purpose, the form of government is centralized, the county officers are appointed by the Governor, and the Negroes are deprived of the local self-government which county majorities of their race might give them. In South Carolina, the system of electoral machinery is especially and confessedly designed, and effectually operated, to deprive the Negroes of a voice in politics. He quotes from a leading Southern newspaper, that "as long as a white man capable of holding office can be found, no negro, however worthy and capable, shall be appointed."

The Negroes never did and do not now draw a strict color line in politics. Even in reconstruction days, when everything favored Negro supremacy, the Negroes generally entrusted the public offices of county and State to white men. And speaking for Virginia, even as late as 1878–82, when the party of which the Negroes were the main strength had absolute control of the State, almost every office, from United States Senator to clerks in the State Capitol, were given to white men, and white men were elected to Congress, and to the State Legislature, by unquestioned Negro majorities. Even to this day, in the so-called "Black Counties," the negroes generally yield to the whites all but the smallest and least desirable offices. "Whatever their other defects," says the writer quoted, "the Negroes, as a rule, have sense enough to select for office-holders the best whites they can find in their own party, and in default of them they select the best Democrats obtainable." If the negroes are too ignorant to fill the offices themselves, surely no better testimony than this to their wisdom and public spirit could be asked for. And if they do this because of their own incompetency to govern, all the more from this example, Southern white people "should dismiss, as unmanly and unwarrantable, the fear that ruin and disaster

will follow in the train of the free suffrage of the blacks."

The adherence of the Negro to what the South calls the "Radical" party is the only result that could be expected, in view of the attitude of the two parties in the South toward him. The one gave him freedom and citizenship, and *promises*, at least, to do what it can to secure him in the exercise of his rights. The other still says to him not only that he belongs to a degraded and inferior race, but that in all his public relations he must be judged and treated according to his *race's* merits and demerits, while his white fellow-citizen monopolizes the ennobling liberty of being judged and treated according to what he is himself. "With these facts before us, how can we expect the Negroes to be anything but our political opponents and the adherents of our political adversaries?"

"To break this dark and ominous color line, rests with us; but we can only obliterate it by treating the Negroes with equity and impartiality, and by according them cheerfully all the rights that we ourselves enjoy."

The sum is this:—

1. That where the color line is drawn arbitrarily and artificially in any merely civil relation in the South, it is drawn by the white man.

2. That even by the white man the black man is not charged with drawing the color line contrary to the white man's wish, save only in politics.

3. That even in politics the black man draws the color line only where any man would draw it if he were colored; that is, only against those white men who draw the color line inexorably in every other public relation.

Why, then, in strictly public relations should not this incalculably expensive color line be removed?

THE SOUTHERN STRUGGLE FOR PURE GOVERNMENT.

I.

The world has ceased to look to imperial rule for pure government. Men may at times still couple the two, but it is only in momentary resentment of the fact that nowhere yet is there a people under electoral rule whose government is entirely pure.

Yet, excepting Russia, there is hardly a people of European origin on earth that has not secured in some valuable degree the enjoyment of electoral representative government; and although the impurities remaining in such governments lie mainly in their defective electoral methods, yet the world refuses to look back to imperial rule for refuge or remedy. Not the suffocation, but the purification, of the ballot is recognized as the key to the purification of government.

But how shall we purify the ballot? We cannot say only the pure shall vote, and then decide, on crude generalizations who, or what sorts, are pure. That would be as if instead of making a filter work thoroughly, we should forbid that any

but pure water be put into the filter. No class or party is so pure but its vote needs the filtration of effective electoral methods; methods so effective as to bear the whole strain of a genuinely popular vote. For any class to say, "The pure shall constitute the State, and we are the pure," is itself imperial tyranny. But we can say the vote shall be pure, and trust ultimately to see a purified ballot purify the balloters. Not the banishment of all impure masses from the polls, but the equal and complete emancipation of all balloters from all impure temptations or constraints, is the key to the purification of the ballot.

It stands to reason that most men want good government. If without constraints they choose bad government it is by mistake. Society disfranchises the felon, the idiot, the pauper, the lunatic, because it is fair to infer, as it is not of men in general, that they have no clear choice for good government. The only trouble is that though most men want good government, they want it, mostly, for themselves. From these two truths rise the wisdom and necessity of self-government. Men can never safely depend upon others to supply them benevolently with good government. "No man is good enough to govern another without his consent;" the only free government is self-government. But the

only practicable self-government on any large scale being electoral and representative, the purity of the ballot becomes a vital necessity. For the only true end of self-government is free government, and of free government, pure government, as of pure government it is the purity, no less than the prosperity, of the whole people. No government or political party has ever yet attained complete purity, because ends must wait on means and pure government cannot be got except through free government, nor free government except by self-government

Indeed, purity and freedom are so interwoven and identified with one another that to distinguish between them scarcely separates them in the mind. But a pure government is especially one where all the people are wholly and equally protected from the possible corruptness of officials; while a free government is one in which all civil classes, in office or out of office, and all political parties, in power or out of power, are fully and equally protected from each other. Obviously, there can be no united and effective effort for such pure government, while an insecurity of free government keeps classes or parties preoccupied with one another's actual or possible aggressions. Probity is the one absolute essential of society's happiness. An impure govern-

ment makes an impure people, and pure government would be society's transcendent necessity were it not that to lose free government is to lose both. The end must wait on the means. Pure government is pure gold; but to get gold in continuous supply you must first have iron. Free government is iron—iron and steel. So first of all free government, and then pure government.

Yet we must confront the opposite truth. A government not free, nor trying to become free, must become corrupt—cannot become pure; but even a free government cannot remain corrupt and continue free. True freedom is liberty with equity; corruption is liberty without equity; and no man gets a freedom he ought not to have, without paying for it some other freedom he cannot afford to lose. The Reconstruction State governments in the South after the Civil War were set up on very broad and commendable foundations of free government; but not using free government as an end to pure government, they fell, owing their fall largely to the corruption of the ballot, and actually overthrown by a party whose opposing policy was the impracticable proposition of pure government first, free government afterward.

And now, as to these things, where do we,

of America, stand? The answer is not inspiring. There is probably not a State in our Union whose good citizens do not confess and lament corruption in its elections. What the Governor of New York writes of his own State is true of the whole Union. "Bribery and intimidation are not confined to any locality." How is this?

For one thing, overlooking the degree of freedom attained by other countries since we declared ours, we have learned to lay upon our freedom the false charge of having produced our political corruption. Many countries have become almost or quite as free as we, even in the matter of suffrage, and are pressing forward, while among us voices are heard repenting our rashness, as though in manhood suffrage we had made a mistake which the rest of the world was condemning. Whether of the French, the Germans, the Italians, we admit or deny that they are as free as we, we have to confess that such freedom as they enjoy is not a gift bestowed upon them by the purity of "strong" governments. It is a prize snatched by them from corrupt governments, and such purification as they have wrought is the product of freedom. Even if they have, with less freedom than we, effected some larger purifications of government—this of the ballot, for instance—still they have done

it on the plan of free government the means, pure government the end. They teach us not that we are too free, but only that we have been too well pleased with freedom as an ultimate end.

But our fathers had not only to establish free States and free institutions without models before them; they had other great tasks. For instance, they had to learn State and national banking and general public financiering; and they learned them in a series of gigantic blunders in comparison with whose devastating results those of the Southern Reconstruction governments of 1868–'77 sink into insignificance. In other words, they had to learn how to vote wisely; and no people ever learned how to vote except by voting.

Moreover, while for over a hundred years we have had great freedom, for three-fourths of that time we had also a great slavery, which constantly threatened the destruction of true freedom. Not that even the pro-slavery party, whatever its leaders may have been, wanted government to be bad, or free men to be less free; they even looked forward—though with more longing than hope—to some indefinite day, when their own slaves might somehow enter into freedom. Beyond dispute, then, as to-day, a vast majority

of the whole people in every State of the Union wanted both free and pure government; but we were divided into two opposing hosts; one for pure government through free government, the other for pure government before free government. Out of the resulting strife has come the nation's declaration for all time, that pure government cannot come before free government, and that not even in the name of pure government shall true freedom be abridged.

Another obvious truth: pure and free governments advance by alternating steps. Men will not help others to set up pure government who refuse them free government. Nor will men help those to advance free government who refuse them pure government; and if each school holds out hostilely against the other, ruin must follow; but if not, a patriotic and entirely noble political commerce may spring up between the two. A nation so doing may have to see itself outstripped for a moment in the direction of free government by others less pure, or of pure government by others less free, or of material wealth by others neither so pure nor so free; but it is, nevertheless, on a broader, higher road to perfect freedom, purity, and prosperity at last, than any different sort can possibly be.

II.

There is a part of our country, however, where conditions are seemingly so peculiar and exceptional that to innumerable minds both there and throughout the nation, no theorizing on the relations and necessities of pure and free government can be made to appear practicably applicable. We must grapple with the very facts in this specific case, or else our theorizings are of no use to those who, in the North or South, stand distraught between two seemingly antagonistic necessities, the one for pure, the other for free, governments in our Southern States.

Even the initial axiom, that most men want good government, is denied. Most white men, yes; but here is the whole lower mass made up of an inferior race which, we are assured, neither knows nor cares anything about good government. So ignorant, unintelligent, and base are they, it is said, that to give them any larger freedom than they are now allowed would only be to make them easily and certainly the tools of the most vicious misleaders of popular cupidity, vanity and passion. To offer by genuine proffers of fuller civil freedom to buy their coöperation for measures looking to purer government, it is maintained, would make them drunk with self-

importance, and would be a suicidal confession that the present ruling class is not strong and pure enough to establish and maintain pure government without the aid of the ruled. To give the Negro the same full civil and political freedom that the white man has, would, they say, be fatal, because in that case white men would never divide on questions of public policy, lest the blacks, if not already united, should at once unite, and under corrupt leaders seize the reins of power.

Now to these things what can we answer?

Let us take them seriatim. First, then, as to the statement that virtually the whole mass of Negroes in the South care nothing for good government, we say, that to establish such a vast exception to so general a truth requires exhaustive proofs. Where are they? Reconstruction times do not furnish them. They may show that the Reconstruction party, white and Negro, constantly and formidably opposed by a party exclusively white and hostile to the equal civil liberties of whites and Negroes, did not achieve, may be did not often earnestly try to achieve, purity in government. But they do not prove that the Negroes would not have been well pleased to join pure government with free. They only prove our premise, that there can be no

effective effort for pure government, while an insecurity of free government keeps classes or parties occupied with one another's actual or possible aggressions. The great majority of the Negroes are illiterate, improvident, reckless and degraded. But so is the Irish peasant. So is the Russian serf. The fact is proof presumptive that Irish, Russian, or Negro—they are far more concerned for a better freedom, whether economic, civil or political, than for pure government; but not that pure government is something they would rather not have.

How could it be? Tens of thousands of them own the land they till, the houses they live in. With scarcely a very rich man among them, they own to-day certainly not less than $100,000,000, some say $160,000,000 worth of taxable wealth. Over 1,000,000 of their children, half their total school population, are enrolled in the public schools, where their average daily attendance is more than 600,000. Their principal industry is agriculture, the most peaceable and peace-promoting labor of the hand known to mankind. Their crops in the year 1889, unless high journalistic authority is in error, aggregated the value of $900,000,000. Is it to be believed that the whole mass, or any preponderating fraction of such a people as this is so supinely indifferent to,

or so abjectly ignorant of, the advantages of pure over corrupt government, that they prefer the corrupt, other things being equal? And are we to credit this statement on the bare, emotional declaration of communities that a few years ago—claiming to be the only people who are in a position to understand the Negro—honestly believed he would not earn his bread in a state of freedom, and was mentally incapable of receiving an ordinary common school education? Must we go even further and believe that none of them, not even a moderate number, care enough for the purification of the governments over them to vote for pure measures and good rulers, even if these should boldly declare for a removal of unjust encroachments upon their public rights and liberties? Hundreds of thousands of them take pains—not a few take risks—to vote, voting far oftener for white men than for colored. Do these prefer corrupt rulers and measures, and for mere corruption's sake? The answer is familiar. Their leaders, it is said, do actually want corruption for its own sake, to fatten on it, and in vast solid masses the great black herd blindly follows these leaders. But wherein lies the strange power of these leaders? In consanguinity? They are oftener white than colored. In promises of official patronage?

UNIV
CAL

There are not places enough to go half around among the leaders. How then? By the literal buying of the ballots? Ballot buying may turn the fortune of a close election, but it can never make whole vast masses of people vote all one way. How then do they lead them? They lead them by means that prevail, not because these masses are of Negro race, nor because they are ignorant and degraded, but because they are human; by means of promises of deliverance from oppressive or offensive public conditions, from which they see other men profitably free, and long themselves to be delivered. That men should be willing to follow whoever is for their induction into all and only the full measure of American freedom, and count that their supreme necessity, is the poorest proof in the world that they are all opposed to pure government. It is rarely, if ever, said that the Negroes have no patriotism. But patriotism inevitably implies some worthy measure of desire for pure government. Can any one suppose there is no patriotism anywhere among 8,000,000 of people who cannot be worried out of the country of their birth? The assertion that the whole mass of Negroes in the South is inimical to pure government, is emotional, not rational.

III.

But we have next the assertion that they would become so if the hand of suppression were withdrawn. This is a very ancient argument. A century ago it was believed and practically applied against millions of white men, just as it is now urged against millions of Negroes, and was based on the same specious assumption, that the ignorant, unintelligent and unmoneyed man is virtually in all cases dangerous to society and government, and most dangerous when invested with civil and political liberty. Nor was its repudiation any rash leap taken initially by our own country in the heat of revolution. Manhood suffrage, even for white citizens of the United States, is barely seventy-five years old, and of all the earlier States of the Union, is youngest in New England. To-day, except only Russia and one or two others less notable, every white man's government in the world has either reached or is steadily moving toward manhood suffrage. The republics of South and Central America, some of which are not purely white men's governments at all, are well along on the same road, and wherever they have also shaken off the slavery of slaveholding and the fetters of ecclesiastical tyranny, are rising into commer-

cial and political greatness. Yet we must still meet the same argument, long overturned as to white men, but readapted and made special against Negroes as so far exceeding white men in cupidity, vanity and passion, that what political experiment may have proved even as to ignorant, unintelligent and unmoneyed white men, is not thereby made even supposably possible as to Negroes.

The loose assertions offered to support this assumption we deny. We deny that this utter and manifest unfitness of the Negro is believed by all respectable Southern white men. All through the South there are worthy white men who deny that the experiment need be futile or disastrous. We deny that Southern white men by virtue of close daily contact with the Negro in multitude are so exclusively able to decide this point, that their word ought to be final. Some men may be too far off, but just as certainly others may be too near, to decide it uncounselled; and in fact every great step thus far taken towards the Negro's real betterment has been first proposed by those remote from him while it has been condemned as idle or dangerous by those nearest him. We deny that the experiment of full civil and political liberty has ever been fairly tried on the Negroes of the

South. One thing has always been lacking, the want of which has made the experiment a false and unfair trial. It always lacked the consent—it had the constant vehement opposition—of almost the whole upper class of society in the commonwealth where the freedman's new and untried citizenship rested. Without land-ownership, commerce, credit, learning, political or financial experience, the world's acquaintance and esteem, the habit of organization, or any other element of political power except the naked ballot and the ability to appeal at last resort to the Federal authority, and with almost the whole upper class of society, and well nigh all these elements of power skillfully arrayed against them, the Negroes, accepting the party leadership and fellowship of any and every sort of white man who would only recognize their new tenure of rights, took up the task, abandoned to them in confident derision by their former masters, of establishing equal free government for all, in the States whose governments had never before been free to other than white men. The resulting governments were lamentably corrupt. But it was the day of Tweed, rings and Credit Mobiliers, great and small, the climacteric hour of official corruption throughout a whole nation hitherto absorbed in the rougher work of estab-

lishing a complete freedom. Even so they began to rise on broader, truer foundations of political liberty and equity than had ever been laid in those States before: and certainly no people, even when not antagonized by the great bulk of a powerful class above them, ever set up both free and pure government in the first twelve years of their bodily emancipation or the first nine years of their enfranchisement. Another twelve years has passed, with the Negroes' political power nullified, and the white, intelligent, wealth holding class in uninterrupted control; and still that class is longing and groping in vain for pure government, and is confessedly farther from it at the end of its twelfth year of recovered control than it was at the end of its first, while the principles of free government are crowded back to where they were twenty years ago. No, it is not the admission of, it is the refusal to admit, the Negro into political co-partnership—not monopoly—on the basis of a union of free and pure governments, that has produced the very conditions which it was argued such admission would precipitate.

It was this refusal that threw him, intoxicated with more importance and power than either friend or foe intended him to have, into the arms of political hypocrites and thieves. It is this

refusal that has demolished with ghastly clearness the truth, counted suicidal to confess, that even the present ruling class is not strong enough or pure enough to establish and maintain pure government without the aid and consent of the governed. I admit the Negro problem is not always and only political. No problem can be. It is not in the nature of politics for any question to be only political. The Negro question is fundamentally a question of civil rights, including political rights as the fortress of all the others. It is not always a peculiarly African proneness to anarchy; nor is it always race instinct; it is often only the traditional pride of a master-class, that remands the Negro to a separate and invidious tenure of his civil rights; but it is to perpetuate this alienism that he is excluded from the political co-partnership; and it is the struggle to maintain this exclusion that keeps the colored vote solid, prevents its white antagonists from dividing where they differ as to other measures, and holds them under a fatal One-Party idea that rules them with a rod of iron.

We see then how far the facts of history and present conditions are from proving the Southern States an exception to the rule that pure government cannot be got by setting its claims before and above free government. Rather, they

present these States as striking examples of free government itself falling into decay through the well-meant but fatal policy of seeking its purification by constricting the rights and liberties of the weaker and inferior ranks of society.

IV.

Washington, bidding a last farewell to public office, and uttering his parental warnings to the people, pronounced, not largeness or universality of freedom, nor illiteracy, nor unintelligence, but a rankness of party spirit the worst enemy of popular government. If he could characterize "the alternate domination of one faction over another" as "itself a frightful despotism," what would he have said of an arbitrarily *permanent* domination of one party over another and a culmination of party spirit into the One-Party idea; the idea that a certain belief and policy are so entirely, surely and exclusively right that men who do not assent to them are incendiary, vile, outrageous, and not morally entitled to an equal liberty and security under the laws with those from whom they dissent? A State ruled by such a sentiment is no longer under a free government. A people seeking pure government under that idea are trifling with destiny and hurrying towards disaster, and in simple

humanity, if not in their own involved interest, those who see their error ought to stop them if there is a way to do it consistent with righteous law.

Is there any such way? Let us look at the situation. The Reconstruction governments in the South; while still holding, not for Negro domination, which they never held for, but for equal free government for all, lost in large measure the nation's respect and good-will by an acute moral and financial defalcation. They were allowed to be overturned by measures often severely revolutionary, on the assurance of their opponents to the nation and to the world that their only desire and design was pure government, and that they were more than willing and amply able to furnish it at once and follow it closely with the amplest measure of free government contemplated in the Amendments to the Constitution. Some Southern men may deny that this was the understanding on which their party was allowed to retake the monopoly of its State governments. The question is not important, for it is not proposed here to mourn the extinction of the Reconstruction governments as one mourns the death of the righteous, nor to lay upon the men who destroyed them the whole blame of the error committed. Whatever

one or another's understanding was, it cannot for a moment be denied that this was the hope and expectation of the great North and West. The blame—if blame were worthy of count—was on those—whether in North or South, in the Republican, or Democratic, or any third or fourth party—who comforted themselves with the delusion that a policy of pure government first, free government afterward, could produce either free or pure government. Seeing at last that this delusion is *what* was and is to blame, the question who was to blame—where no side was wrong by choice — is a question we may sink, with its answer, forever beneath the sea of oblivion.

Through twelve weary and distressful years this fallacy has been given as fair a trial as anything ever had, and to-day more manifestly than ever before it is weighed in the balances and found wanting. For years the show and promise of better things joined themselves with a faith in the all-healing power of time, peace and material prosperity, to soothe the nation's solicitude and sustain its hope.

The Southern State governments had hardly changed hands, when their financial credit began to rise with a buoyancy which proved—if such proof had been needed—that it was only the

governments repudiated and antagonized by the wealth-holding portion of the people that were bankrupt, and, whether their action was justifiable or not, it was nearer the truth to say the people had bankrupted the governments than that the governments had bankrupted the people.

For a long time the sincerity and earnest diligence of the more intelligent and liberal wing of the Southern Conservatives bent itself to a most commendable progressive measure; one which had already been irrevocably begun under the Reconstruction governments as an indispensable adjunct to the extension of civil or political freedom. This measure was the expansion of the public school system, a system which, wherever it has found large establishment—in America, England, or elsewhere—has always followed, not produced, the extension of the suffrage. This measure was, and is, practicable even under the rule of the One-Party idea, because, while public education is the own child of the scheme of free government first, it is almost the only important factor of that scheme which does not obviously antagonize the opposite policy. And yet this opposite policy of pure government first is not, and by nature cannot be, the zealous promoter of the free school system

that a free government policy is sure to be. A policy of freedom first inevitably precipitates and perpetuates an immediate and imperative exigency which can be met only by an entirely ample provision for the whole people's education. The policy of pure government first, assuming that ignorance and impurity are much the same thing, promises that ignorance shall therefore not participate in government, and casting about, now on the right hand and now on the left, for expedients to prevent it, accepts free schools as one, but with a divided credence and a tame enthusiasm. This is why the Southern States to-day have only schools enough for half their school population, and believe they are bearing as heavy a burden of school tax as any people of equal means can, while the States and territories of the West, under the ideas of free government first and of two parties of equal rights, are taxing themselves far heavier, even where they have less wealth. The example of some of these Western communities is complete proof that the only sense in which it can be said that the South is doing all it can for public education is that Southern State legislators may be levying as heavy a school tax as they can reasonably hope to collect from a people lulled by the assurances and methods of a policy of pure government

first.* It has been much reiterated in the South and re-echoed in the North that the task of public education in the Southern States suffers a unique and unparalleled drawback in the fact that while the Negroes enjoy nearly half the outlay of the school funds, almost the entire amount of those funds is paid by white taxpayers. But assuming this to be quite true in every other regard, there are two points in which it is not so. First, the very alphabet of economics teaches us that all taxes do not rest entirely on those from whom they are collected, but that hundreds of thousands of men who are too poor to be found enumerated on the tax-rolls are for all that reached by taxation through the medium of rents and similar indirections. And, second, that the fact quoted is far from being unique and unparalleled. The only thing peculiar about it is that this lower and unmoneyed mass, which, as

---

* *The Donaldsonville* (*La.*) *Chief*, of Feb. —, 1890, says: "We have 38 public schools in this parish and 9855 scholars to educate in them, or about 260 pupils to the teacher!

"Taking the maximum number of pupils fixed by the law, it would require no less than 250 teachers to do justice to the educational subjects of the parish. The 'vast improvement' is mere brain figment. The whole yearly school income for our parish is not much more than enough to conduct properly a sufficient number of schools presided over by competent instructors for thirty days. It is all that we can pay, however."

a matter of good investment in the whole public interest, is in every State in the Union freely accorded an enjoyment of the school funds out of all proportion to its money contributions, happens in the South to be a distinct race which has been working for the last one hundred and fifty years, but has been drawing wages only for the last twenty-five.

V.

Another great progressive measure which accompanied and still accompanies the policy of pure-government-first, though it, too, began under the opposite régime, was one which no policy save absolute anarchy can ever resent. This was the development of natural resources, the multiplication of industries, the increase of material wealth. The party that represented the bulk of society's landed and personal wealth, inspired by the only policy it could believe to be honorable or safe, entered into entirely new relations to the public credit of their towns, counties and States, and gave the energy of a new hope to the making of private fortunes. The successes of this movement have been positively brilliant. The unadorned true stories of Anniston and Chattanooga and Birmingham, of Memphis and Nashville, and At-

lanta and Richmond, are almost as romantic as they are inspiring, a theme lingered upon by Northern tongues and a Northern press with a warmth that indicates a proper recognition of the North's own great gain in the South's prosperity. Nevertheless, the very fullness and renown of this success has wrought two grave errors. A sagacious and enterprising few may get rich in any country blessed with natural resources; but no *country* ever won or can win a large and permanent prosperity save by the prosperity of its poor. No country can ever build a sound prosperity while it tolerates conditions that keep a large lower mass on low wages and long hours. This is the word, not of politicians alone, but of economists and financiers, and this is a fact which the sunburst of a sudden great material development in many regions of the South has hidden in deep shadow. That Southern men, still so largely under the stress of Southern traditions, should overlook this is largely natural and excusable; but that the North, too, with its so wide and fortunate experience of better conditions, should not see and point out the oversight seems strange. It may be doubted that there is a high-school between Boston and Denver whose pupils are not taught that the greatest source of the decay of nations is the congestion of wealth and degra-

dation of poverty. No sufficient offsets for it have yet been found in any scheme of public society, but the search for them is the great quest of the age, and the safety, peace and prosperity of Europe, the Americas, and the great Australasian colonies is mainly due to the adoption of such noble, though incomplete, offsets as have been found. These are equal rights and protection to opposing parties, free schools for the whole people, manhood suffrage, and a pure, free ballot.

Such is one of the two great errors that have fastened themselves upon the otherwise entirely admirable material development of the "New South." The other is twin to it. It is that this material development is not only economically sound, but that it has also a political potentiality, and can of itself solve, and is solving, the Southern problem. Where is its solution? The claim is absurd. It is simply fantastical to expect a mere aggregation of private movements for the building of private fortunes to unravel the snarled thread of civil and political entanglements in a commonwealth. It may in self-defence rally to the support of public financial credit; but farther it is not in its nature to go. What has this one done? We are reminded that "in the South there are Negro lawyers, teachers, editors, den-

tists, doctors and preachers working in peace and multiplying with the increasing ability of their race to support them." But whence came they? Nine-tenths of those teachers and preachers and ninety-nine hundredths of those lawyers, editors, dentists and doctors have got their professions in colleges built and sustained by Northern money, and taught by Northern missionary teachers whom the great bulk of this New South rewards with social ostracism. They work in peace. But what a peace! A peace bought by silent endurance of a legalized system of arrogant incivilities that make them, in almost every public place, conspicuous objects of a public disdain which is not always even silent. What single one of those tyrannous and vulgar intrusions of private social selection into purely public places, has this New South of iron and coal mines, and new railways and cotton mills, and oil-presses removed? Not one! From the ennobling relaxations of the drama, the opera, the oratorio, the orchestral symphony and sonata; from the edifying diversions of the popular lecture, the picture gallery, and even the sacred service and sermon of the popular preacher; from the refining comforts of the first-class railway coach and the public restaurant; from the character making labors, disciplines and rewards

of every academy, college and even law, medical and divinity school, supported by Southern money and attended by white youth; and from the popular respect paid to those who enjoy these things and withheld from those to whom they are forbidden, these "Negro lawyers, teachers, editors, dentists, doctors and preachers, working in peace and multiplying with the increasing ability of their race to support them," are shut out by rules sustained by State legislation, which refuses to share even the Decalogue on equal terms with the Negro, but annexes to it an eleventh and "colored" commandment—"Thou shalt try to become a gentleman." Where has this New South movement opened to colored people, paying taxes or not, professionally educated or not, the privileges of a single public library?

Our attention is challenged to $900,000,000 worth of crops raised in the South last year. We are not told that the producers of this vast abundance enjoy in one full and common measure all the public rights declared to be theirs by the national Constitution. That falsehood so long believed by so many even of those who uttered it in North and South, is utterly worn out. But we are asked if we can doubt that such a product came from peaceful fields and

contented and duly remunerated labor. Yes, we can! Did the vast wheat crops of ancient Egypt come from peaceful fields and a well-contented husbandry? Are her pyramids the product of duly remunerated labor? Did the great crop of 1860—raised when the Negroes were half their present numbers—come from men satisfied with their wages? From the eastern borders of Russia, a huge wave of material development is at present rolling eastward across Siberia with an energy and speed until lately supposed by Americans to be found only in our own great, free West. The commerce of the Volga rivals that of the Mississippi. The volume of trade of the city of Nizhni Novogorod rose from some $60,000,000 in 1868 to about $120,000,000 in 1881. A great through Siberian railway, to be completed in from three to six years, is now in various stages of survey and construction, whose trunk line alone will stretch eastward to the Japan Sea, about 5000 miles beyond Moscow. It runs already through millions of acres of fruitful fields tilled by an industrious peasantry. But is Siberia a free country? Spain is a land of harvest and song. Have the laborers in her vineyards and olive-yards a freedom that ought to satisfy a citizen of the United States? Has America any class of society in which we

can afford to cultivate contentment with a Russian or a Spanish measure of civil or political liberty? There is a contentment which is more intolerable to the order and interest of a free country like ours, than a discontent that leaves the ripened grain unharvested to guard the rights of free man. Which of the two has this industrial development, or any other outcome of the policy of pure government first, cherished and stimulated? For twelve years it has persuaded an apparent majority of the nation to leave to it the fitting of the Negro for citizenship, even refusing national aid to lift the burden of public education it counts insupportable; yet to this day it has made not the slightest provision for admitting any Negro to the full measure of any civil or political right by virtue of acquired fitness. *The New Orleans Times-Democrat* of Nov. 5th, says, "The race issue is a national antagonism . . . and has nothing whatever to do with education or the lack of education. To the Negro varnished with such learning as he is capable of acquiring, there is even a more pronounced antipathy than to the Negro of the cotton-field and kitchen." "The schools," says the *Atlanta Constitution* barely six months ago, "have been in active operation for over twenty-five years, and it is estimated that several hun-

dred thousand of the colored voters can now read and write. The difficulties, however, have increased with the progress of education, and are now more difficult than they ever were before. . . . Not the slightest advancement toward an adjustment of the two races on political grounds has been made anywhere, and even the direction of such advance is a matter of speculation." In plain words, after twelve years of wandering through a night of false political traditions, these largely sincere guides to pure government first and free government afterwards, acknowledge at last that they are lost in the woods under a starless sky.

VI.

The failure to get good government has been absolutely abject. Not only has no material advance been made toward free government, but the governments that started out twelve years ago full of honest intentions to be or become pure, have grown confessedly corrupt, and are now avowing with hardihood or shame things that a few years ago they denied with indignation. Let it be gladly admitted that open personal bribery of officials is rare. And naturally; for where an upper and property holding class holds secure and arbitrary power over an illiterate and destitute laboring class, and really

desires pure government, personal official integrity will still be demanded after equity has been overlooked in legislation; and whereas in the struggle of an under class for better freedom against great odds, the personal impurities of leaders may be for some time overlooked, in an effort of an upper class for pure government the personal dishonesty of officials will be the last symptom of hopeless and corrupt failure. The fact still stands that the Southern party, which really started in quest of the higher grounds of pure government, is moving in a mass of corrupt measures. In the late Prohibition movement in Georgia its wholesale bribery of ignorant Negro voters was open and boastful.

In Alabama, Mississippi, and other cotton States, under a domination which more and more tends to become merely a taxpayers' government, there has sprung up a system of crop-lien laws, mainly if not wholly devoted to the protection of landholders and storekeepers against farm tenants, so barren of counter protections for the tenant that they have fairly earned the name given them by a United States judge in Arkansas, of "anaconda mortgages." Said this gentleman in an address before the Arkansas State Bar Association, in 1886, "as a result of these defective and bad

laws, the State is afflicted with a type of money lenders, traders, and methods of doing business the like of which was never seen before." Quoting from a parliament report the statement that a certain creditor in Ireland had charged a Connaught peasant a rate of interest aggregating 43½ per cent. per annum, he asked, "What is 43½ per cent. compared to the profits charged by the holders of anaconda mortgages on tenants in Arkansas? They would scorn 43½ per cent." And another member of the Association had already said of a signer of one of these mortgages, "a place where he could borrow money at usury would be an asylum to him . . . . I have known men—laboring men, farmers and renters—to pay twenty and twenty-five per cent. interest for money and secure its payment, rather than mortgage their property and buy supplies on credit." If in the face of these facts Negroes are moving by tens of thousands from North and South Carolina to Mississippi and Arkansas, that surely is something not for us, but forNorth and South Carolina to explain. Probably the best explanation, beyond the eager enterprise of railroad companies, is that these ignorant laborers, like thousands of other immigrants, do not know what they are going to.

It will be said that the burdens of this system

fall as heavily on a white man as if he were black. That may be, but it is a system unknown in our free land except in States where the tenant class is mostly Negroes, and just as far as white debtors fall under it, it illustrates a fact of which it is far from being the only proof; that this whole policy of the black man's repression under a taxpayer's government is constantly escaping from its intended bounds and running into a fierce and general oppression of the laboring classes, white or black. Yet the wealth-holding, taxpaying citizens of these same States, still really and untiringly bent upon a large and noble renaissance in commerce, industry and government, hold conventions and subscribe money to promote immigration. Can no one make them understand that a desirable immigration will never come to a land of long hours, low wages and "anaconda mortgages." The only way to make the South a good place for white men to come to is to make it a good place for black men to stay in.

It belongs to the imperfections of human society even at its best, that as yet, even under the purest, freest conditions, the poor suffer many times more chances than the rich of being legally punished for criminal errors. Moreover, the poor man's home and neighborhood become

the cesspool and garbage heap of the prisons' discharges, pardons and escapes. The penal system of a country is therefore supremely the very poor man's concern, if not even his supreme concern. Hence it can never be stripped of a political value. If there were no other reason why the poor and ignorant should enjoy the scant self-protection of manhood suffrage, this would be enough. And with what clearness has the Southern party of one-party-and-pure-government proved this? For twelve years it has retained the Convict Lease System, a prison system entirely peculiar to the Southern States, and baffling comparison for corrupt and mortal cruelty with any system of prisons between here and St. Petersburg. It has not merely retained the system. Legislatures and governors have, sometimes officially, sometimes unofficially, allowed "penitentiary rings" to become financial and political factors in the fortunes of their parties and their States, while all the better elements of the party and press, burning with righteous shame and resentment, and crying out against them, nevertheless endure the outrage clamped and riveted upon them by the exigencies of a One-party policy and the alienation of the great bulk of the poor man's vote. Nowhere this side of Russia and Turkey is there a region of country,

of such ratio of wealth or population, so recklessly, suicidally barren of reformatories for destitute and wayward boys and girls.

But there are other fruits of this well-meant but vain policy. In 1868 the Reconstruction party in North Carolina adopted, by a new constitution, the township system so well and favorably known in the States of the North and West. When in 1875 the party of pure-government-first gained power, however much personal corruption in office it may have found, it found also as perfect a form of republican State government as there was in the Union. Every provision which any State enjoyed for the protection of public society from its bad members and bad impulses, was either provided or easily procurable under the constitution of the State. Yet within a year this party, for the avowed purpose of nullifying the power of their opponents in every county where those opponents were still in the majority, so amended the State constitution as to take away the powers of self-government from every county in the State and centralize them in the legislature under a base counterfeit of the system of government displaced by the "radicals" in 1868. Under this system — unknown to any other State—a preponderance of power over elections and election returns is se-

cured to the majority in the State legislature, so great that no party retaining it can clear itself of the charge of corrupt intentions. In South Carolina this same party, now that rifle clubs and tissue ballots have passed away, confesses, with the pardonable buoyancy of a relieved conscience, that those measures were intolerably corrupt. Yet the eight-box system still stands in their stead, raising the same blush of mortification, yet commanding from them the same subjection as do lynch law and the convict lease system.

Such are the conditions after twelve years of efforts by an intelligent, accomplished, determined, persistent, heroic people to hold down free government with one hand till they can set up pure government with the other. For twelve of our modern years, each one worth an ancient century, the cry of pure government first has prevailed, not only among themselves but throughout the nation. For its sake, this nation, almost as universally dazed as they by the bright plausibility of the mistake, has endured more deadly outrages against its citizens within its own borders than it would have tamely submitted to from all the great powers of the earth combined. The mass to be held in subjection has been the inferior in numbers, prowess, intelligence, wealth and

every other element of military or political strength; not turbulent and ferocious, but on the Southern white man's testimony, tractable, amiable, dependent. The great national party that, unhindered, might have lifted this subjection, has for twenty-five years found itself opposed, and for the last twelve years pinioned, by another party quite or almost its match in numbers, power, integrity, and skill, vehemently charging it with rushing to the rescue of freedom too rashly for freedom's good. The class proposing to rule the South alone, is honest in purpose, still filled with the spirit of freedom that gave us Washington, and yet as imperial as ancient Rome. It is not they, it is only their policy, that is found wanting. If any people on earth could have carried that policy to success they could. They have proved for all time and for all mankind that it can never be done.

The day in which this truth becomes a popular conviction among our white brethren of the South and among millions in the North whose conversion waits only on theirs, will be the brightest, gladdest, best day that ever dawned on this continent. I believe that dawn is now breaking.

VII.

True, we hear voices through the Southern press crying new schemes for avoiding the simple necessities of free government: the establishment of a Negro Territory; a disfranchisement of over half the Negroes by an educational qualification at the polls; their total disfranchisement by the repeal of the Fourteenth Amendment; and in the very Senate a proposition to deport the Negro to Africa at the national expense, although at the same time and all over the South, men in the same party from which the project comes are stating with new frankness their old doctrine, that though the country shall never belong to the Negro, the Negro simply shall belong to the country. But the very forlornness of these absurd projects, built, themselves, on open confessions that the past is a failure and that something different must be done with all speed, is a final admission that the party pledged to solve the Negro Question without consulting the Negro, feels that it must change its policy or drop from under the nation's misplaced hopes.

The press of the nation almost with one voice rejects the scheme of a Negro territory. We have more Negro territories now than either

white men or Negroes want. Our Indian Territory and Indian deportations and reservations have only wronged the savage, dishonored civilization, complicated the whole Indian question, and still hold it over us in costly and bloody suspense until we shall muster humanity and common sense enough to do unto him as we would that our Southern brother would do unto the Negro—cease condescension, bounty, and fraud, and show mercy, justice and human fraternity.

The proposition to repeal the Fourteenth Amendment deserves as little respect and attention as it is receiving. It would disfranchise thousands of taxpayers and thousands of men able to read and write, still leaving the franchise with hundreds of thousands of total illiterates paying no direct taxes. It would simply reestablish a system of irrational race discrimination. It is well for the honor of the good State of Mississippi, where the proposition has arisen, that along with it comes word that at last an attempt has been made, with some hope of permanent success, to abolish in that State the Convict Lease System.

As to the South Carolina scheme to limit the suffrage by an educational qualification, it seems to have died at birth, smothered under the evident fact that a State, nearly half of whose people

are illiterate and nearly half of whose population of school age are without public provision against illiteracy, has no reason, as it has no right, to hope for an honest vote to disfranchise the illiterate. Well for it that there is no such hope. For no people ever escapes the incubus of a large illiteracy in its poorer classes except by providing a system of public education ample for the whole people; the demand for ample free education is created not by the contraction, but by the enlargement, of the right of suffrage. The most suicidal thing a party of free education can do is to favor an educational qualification of the suffrage before free education is amply supplied; for whenever the issue is between adequate and inadequate provision the vote that tips the scale aright is just the bugbear itself—the illiterate man's vote.

I hold that to prove the moral wrong of a thing is to prove just so far its practical worthlessness. To disfranchise the illiterate is to make the most defenceless part of a community more defenceless still. There is, I know, an educational qualification in Massachusetts, and there are a few illiterates. But there is no illiterate *class*, and the educational qualification here is not mainly for the protection of the suffrage, but a correctional punishment for inexcusable igno-

rance. The dangers of illiteracy have been almost as much overstated as its economic loss has been overlooked. Far the greatest danger in a wide illiteracy is to the illiterate themselves, and though there are reciprocal risks, the supreme urgency for its removal is not their dangerousness to the more fortunate and powerful classes, but the dangerousness of those classes to them. As for the Australian ballot system, wherever in this great union of States it goes for the better liberty of every honest voter, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, and for the confusion of bribers and bribe-takers, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, may God give it good speed. But, alas! for public liberty, purity or safety, wherever it is put into use to abridge the right of suffrage. No people is justly ready for a system of elections that prevents the voting of the illiterate man until it has first provided full public facility for every such man to learn to read and write, and has then given him fair warning and time to learn.

The last and, it seems to me, the most irrational scheme of all, is that embodied in the Bill for the deportation of Negroes to Africa. The graceful arguments of its advocates in the Senate have been fully, ably, brilliantly answered in the Senate, and there is no excuse for more

than a word to the point here. The early admissions and confessions of Abraham Lincoln have been much used in this debate by excellent men, who still repudiate and antagonize the conclusions of his latest wisdom as they once did his earlier. Let us in that wonderful spirit of more than Washingtonian generosity which made him impregnable and irresistible in debate, make every supposition of the advocates of deportation that can be supposed. Say the bill is found to be not unconstitutional; that hundreds of thousands of Negroes want to go, and that Southern white men generally will let them go, despite the palpable fact that the men most likely to go will be, to use an old Southern word, the most "likely" men, the men of health, strength, self-reliance, enterprise, and despite, again, the fact that no large emigration can take place without carrying away millions of ready money with it. Every 100,000 of European emigrants to this country bring about $8,000,000 with them. The industrial value of 100,000 unskilled laborers is $80,000,000. Is a white immigration likely to make up such losses? Let us suppose even this, although no one ever yet heard of one set of emigrants pouring into a country from which a poorer set was pouring out; and although if they will come at all there

is abundance of room for them now, without deporting a single Negro.

What shall we say? We say pass your bill; get your ships ready; proclaim free passage to whomsoever will accept it. Only let there be no compulsion. As a whole nation we are branded with our fathers' sin of bringing these people here; let us not now add to that our own sin of driving them back. Therefore, no compulsions. But the land is full of compulsions. The main argument for the Negroes going is that we are making their stay here intolerable to them. Before we buy or hire one ship, whether these compulsions are in South Carolina or Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio or Massachusetts, let the compulsions be removed. When State and Federal governments have exhausted, as neither has yet done, all their powers of legislation and police to make the Negro in America as free as the white man, then, if the Negro cannot be content, and the people choose to bear the expense of his deportation, let the folly be charged to him, not us, of leaving a free land to which better men were glad to come and fill his voided place. But let this nation never again open the Sacred Scriptures on Independence Day, or on the birthday of Washington lift up its hands to God, if, as matters now stand, it provides money or ships for

the flight back to Africa of the victims of its own tyrannies. This is not the way to settle, but only to delay and hinder the settlement of the Negro question. Emigrants have been pouring out of Ireland for forty years, and their Government has encouraged their going, and still Ireland is full of Irish and the Irish Question is not settled. Pass your Deportation Bill. Help hundreds of thousands of able-bodied Negroes to sail to Africa. But unless you remove the already existing compulsions upon which you are counting to drive them on shipboard, the white immigrant will not come to take his place, and the Negro and the Negro Question will be with us still.

It is true, also, that the infatuation for buying pure government at some other price than the Negro's civil freedom and political coöperation still maintains the iron rule of the one-party idea. It is to this sentiment and policy that we owe the enormities of Lynch-law, with its record of crimes beyond all cavil darker and fouler than all the robberies of Carpet-bag Governments. For these murderous deeds are committed only because the lovers of order and pure government make no serious effort to prevent them, and these make no serious effort only because to punish these murderers would break the solid

square of that one party which makes simple dissent from its doctrines infamous and criminal, the only party that ever has dared to declare openly to this free nation that it must and will rule, whether it represents a majority of the people or not. Is not that the very germinating and perpetuating principle of political corruption? Under what strange skies, on what distant planet, can we believe that such a tree will put forth the flowers and fruit of pure government?

In Nashville lately a gentleman of the southern political orthodoxy gave me this story as strict fact: A traveller, similarly orthodox, sat down at the large supper-table of an Arkansas tavern. The landlord bearing two large steaming covered vessels, identical in size and pattern, one in each hand, passed from guest to guest with always the same hospitable offer of choice: "Tea or Coffee?" "Tea or Coffee." "Coffee," said one. He poured coffee. "Coffee," said a second. He poured coffee. "Coffee," said a third, fourth and fifth. Again once, twice, thrice, the tea-pot was deferentially drawn back and the coffee-pot poured forth its strong, black flood. So our traveller was reached. "Tea or coffee?" "Tea." The landlord drew back bristling, but the next instant was gracious

again. He brought the huge tea-pot nimbly forward and poured from it the same hot, rank "Rio" that he had been pouring from the other pot, saying as he poured, "tea! in Arkansas! No sir. In Arkansas you take coffee or you take nothing." Our traveller drank it without milk. It was, after all, simply his own one-party idea and he had to swallow it.

VIII.

But if the One-party idea still rules in the South, men are longing and reaching out for deliverance from it now as they have not done before since thirty years ago it first laid its complete bondage upon them. From out the South itself has lately been heard a strange, new, most worthy and most welcome sound, the voices of southern white leaders of thought and action charging upon the North the duty and necessity of helping the South to solve the simple question which the northern and southern seekers after pure government through race-rule and postponed rights have snarled into a bewildering problem. This problem has been drawn into the open field of literary debate, a field from which, in these enlightened days, no practical question can escape until it is solved. But the question

is no longer how this problem should be settled; it is only how to persuade men to settle it.

As to this, let us first of all, stop blaming one another; let us blame things not men; ill conditions, false theories, bad schemes. Even among these let us waste no more wrath, no more grief, no more time, over such as are done and can never be undone; but give ourselves faithfully, fraternally, unflinchingly to the pursuit and destruction of every living evil in theory or practice.

In the second place the new material development of the South must go on. If wealth does not necessarily make a people free or virtuous, neither does poverty. But thinking men in the South must rouse themselves to the economic and political necessity for a wider diffusion of wealth and more prosperous conditions of manual labor. The inattention to the study of Economics in most southern colleges amounts to a calamity. To the spirit that prompts this is largely owing a superficial treatment of commercial and industrial conditions that characterizes the greater part of the southern press, and misleads a large class among the southern capitalists of commerce and the industries, who count only themselves practical.

And again, the struggle for pure government

must be neither abandoned nor abated. Only the effort to procure it at the expense of free government must be abandoned. Free government, the equal freedom of all in all public relations, must be recognized as its foremost and supreme necessity. Yet we do not demand a sudden and complete revolution of southern sentiment and policy. All the nation is really impatient for is to see the South once turn and *start* in the right direction.

To this end let it be understood and declared in southern circles, councils, newspapers, that in the southern States, just as truly as in Kansas, Ohio, or Massachusetts, a man can favor the Negro's enjoyment of a white man's public rights without being either a Republican or a traitor. He can be an Equal-rights Democrat. I venture to say that the great bulk of the Republican party itself will look with more respect and pleasure upon a band of southern opponents declaring themselves Equal-rights Democrats, than upon a like reënforcement to its own ranks of Alabama protectionists trying to take the pitifully impossible pose of color-line Republicans.

If men cannot reconcile it to their self-regard or sense of expediency to declare for equality in all public rights at once, let them try a few at a time. Since 1865 the South has found on ex-

periment, sometimes voluntary, sometimes otherwise, a great many things consistent with honor, safety and peace that they had looked upon with loathing and alarm. Why not try a few more? Take, at random, any phase of the matter; for instance, railroad accommodation. If in every southern town Negroes may ride in street-cars, where people crowd one another and no separate place offers to the rag-tag that refuge from the better kept which they always covet, why not try making first-class railway coaches equally free to all kinds of people decent in person and behavior, and require all kinds of rag-tag to accept other accommodations? There is no risk in such a step; nobody really believes there is any, it is purely a matter of pride. But be it pride or be it risk, the street-cars offered the extreme case, and in them the question has long been settled.

Or take another case. Probably the most indefensible, wanton, cruel deprivations suffered by Southern colored people on the score of race is their exclusion from the privileges of the public libraries. Let these excommunications from the pure wells of inspiration that are in good books be withdrawn. Let decent white Southerners say to decent colored Southerners, These concessions—or such as these—will we

make to you if you will join with us politically for pure men and purifying measures. That were a buying of votes without dishonor to either side; and tens of thousands of colored votes, both of those that money can, and that money cannot buy, can be bought at that price. Only let it not be fancied that even Negroes are going to be outwitted more than once or twice by promises that if they will concede something now, their white fellow-citizens will concede something to them by-and-by. Says the Rev. Dr. Thirkield, of Atlanta, in a late allusion to the failure of the Prohibition movement in that city, "The Negro was recognized as a factor in the great civil contest; he was met as a man and a brother; promises were given him as to his civil rights in the conduct of the city government. Through his vote the campaign closed in victory. Then the contact between the two races was broken off; recognition and coöperation in civil, moral and religious work ceased; pledges as to his civil rights were broken. The rum power saw its opportunity, ... organized for victory, and brought again the reign of rum." So it may always be; there is a vote that divides but not destroys; and there is another that solidifies but does not save.

True, to influence the colored vote men must

influence its leaders. But such concessions as we have mentioned are the daily spoken, written, and printed demands of every sort of colored leader, even of those who are accused of being influenced by nothing except the prospect of public office or its equivalent in cash. A full numerical share of public offices, clerkships and contracts is not, and never was, the ultimatum of the vast colored vote, nor even of its colored leaders. They certainly never got it. No party ever promised them that all or half or one-fourth of them should have offices or appointments, or ever gave them all or half, if even a fourth of the offices or appointments. But for the hostility of the great majority of Southern white men to an equality of public rights, no colored leader need ever have been given an office or appointment which he could not reasonably have been expected to fill with credit and honor. With genuine and coveted concessions offered to them in the matter of civil rights, colored voters will not be long finding leaders to whom it will be enough to concede with sincere and practical intent, that merely being a Negro is not an insurmountable bar to the holding of office by one otherwise qualified.

Let the lovers of pure government in the South make such experiments. It can be made

in small or large. There are towns, townships, counties, even States, one or two, in the South, where the two national parties are nearly equal in numbers. There, as elsewhere, the Negro cares, as he should, far more about his own civil and political rights than about who gets into the White House. In such a region a party of pure government ought, by reasonable and generous concessions to a better and more equal freedom, to gain enough colored votes to enable it advantageously to sacrifice some very bad white ones. Only, these concessions must be made in the spirit and guise, not of condescension and protection, but of civil and political equality and fellowship, entering frankly and fully into council with the Negro's recognized leaders, white or colored, appealing to such as are "out of politics," only when those who are in politics will not listen to reason. Say what you will of party leaders and managers, the great Republican party itself would rather be hopelessly outnumbered and defeated in Mississippi or South Carolina by fair means in the interest of free government, than to see a Republican majority tyrannously defrauded under the pretence of procuring or upholding pure government. Nor do I doubt the great Democratic party also would, in its turn, rather be so out-

numbered and defeated, than to see its managers win victory at the price of honor.

But if southern white men will not even yet of their own motion give this method of healing "the nation's running sore," a fair trial, there are still two ways by which such a trial may be had. One is a means which no generous mind in this nation would make other than its last choice. I mean, of course, Federal intervention.

I earnestly protest I have learned too much from the teachings of Washington ever to be a partisan. On the race question I am a Republican; on some others I am a Democrat, and on all questions I know and am ready to avow exactly where I stand. The southern party for pure government first has been given the best twelve years that ever shone on earth, in which to make Federal intervention unnecessary, and has so utterly failed, that it is to-day seen asking in the United States Senate for a species of Federal intervention by no means the safest or best or most constitutional, to help it to remove bodily to Africa the problem whose obvious solution it will not allow even to be tried. I do not favor Federal intervention for the establishment of equal civil and political rights in any State whatever, except as a last resort. As to Federal elections, at least, it is a right placed

beyond cavil by the plain letter of the Constitution. But even there the intention that it should be never other than an unpreferred alternative is plain.

Yet I see to-day only one alternative intervening. Of it I shall speak in a moment. But for this alternative, it seems to me totally incompatible with the dignity and honor of this nation, that, after twelve years of amiable, hopeful waiting, it should let itself be kept indefinitely waiting still for admission to its own simplest rights by the plausible and eloquent door-keepers of a do-nothing policy. A despair that prompts to action and deliverance is better than any false hope, and if such a despair moves this nation, this year or next, to the action it has borne so much to avoid, it can point to these door-keepers, whether they be of North or South, and say, the blame of it and the shame of it be on you!

The only alternative I see, a hope of whose adoption can rightly postpone Federal intervention any longer, is for the Democratic party of the wide North and West to withdraw its support from the southern policy now, as it did in 1860. Said one of the national Democratic leaders to me a few years ago, "That is what we have got to do. The votes we lose by it in

the South will be more than offset by those we shall gain in the North." But I maintain the case is better for them than this. They will gain votes in the North; but they will no more lose the southern white vote than they lost it when with cannon, bayonets and sabres they forced it back into the Union from which it had seceded. Who will say that promptness on this point now may not save them from another such long vacation as procrastination cost them in 1860?

We have yet two years and a half before the next presidential election, in 1892. Let it be hoped and urged that before then the believers in pure government instead of, or before, free government will of their own choice abandon their utterly self-condemned and futile policy, and make at least a visible and appreciable beginning upon that experiment of equal rights for all men and all parties, which, in the modern world, at least, has never failed on fair trial. Has never failed; no, and would not fail in Hayti or San Domingo themselves, if they would once give it the supremacy thus far held by the alternating military tyrannies of opposing factions each delirious with the poison of the one One-party idea.

During these two years and a half let it be made yet plainer than ever before, that Federal

intervention is no willing choice of the Republican, or any party, and that what it, with the whole nation, most covets for every southern State is as large, as full, as universal, and as prosperous a self-government as can be found in any part of this Union. And then, in all kindness, for the South's own sake as much as for the sake of any, in the name of the common welfare and the nation's honor, let the word be spoken, that if by 1892 any State in this Union has not at least begun, with good show of completing, the establishment of equal American rights for all Americans, the men of this nation who, in whatever party, believe in free government first will strain their every nerve and sinew to give the nation a president and a congress that will establish it peaceably, promptly and forever.

The day in which that is done, whether by a southern majority's own motion or by the Government's intervention, will be a great birthday. It may date the birth of some momentary and aimless strife, though this I doubt; but it will certainly date the birth of a better peace, a wider, richer prosperity, a happier freedom of every citizen, and a freer, purer government of this Union and of every State in this Union, than this continent has ever yet

seen. Yea, and complete fraternity between North and South. For it shall not have been long done ere the whole South will rejoice in the day of its doing as now it rejoices in the day when Lincoln freed the Negro, and in the day when Washington by spurning the offer of royal rank and authority declared that the only road to pure government is free government.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the
NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
2-month loans may be renewed by calling
(510) 642-6753
1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books
to NRLF
Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days
prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

JUL 22 1993
JUL 11 2002
JUN 23 1995
RETURNED
JUL 15 1994
Santa Cruz Jitney
JAN 23 1995
RECEIVED
JUN 16 1995
OCT 22 2000
CIRCULATION DEPT
DEC 10 199

YB 37260

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES

B003018660

93495

E
185
.6
C2

OCT 22 2000

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY